

Justice has the courage to admit seizure was wrong

Chalk one up for freedom. A small victory, perhaps, but important. Justice Antonin Scalia has apologized to an Associated Press reporter whose voice recorder was seized and erased by a U.S. marshal on Mr. Scalia's protection detail during a public appearance.

The justice says he's sorry, and it won't happen again. He said he will permit print reporters to record his remarks in the future, understanding that many of them depend on their recordings for accuracy.

Wow. Decency and common sense prevail. The spectacle of a marshal grabbing reporters' recorders in front of God and the entire audience, even as the justice spoke to a high school crowd in Mississippi, is unreal.

This is America, after all. Land of the free. Home of free speech. A place where everyone is presumed innocent until proven guilty. A country, in fact, where federal law forbids agents from seizing reporters' notes, film and gear on a whim.

What happened, apparently, was that the justice had it announced at an earlier speech that it was his policy not to allow recordings of his talks. He also bans television cameras and video recorders.

None of that is unusual. Any speaker has the right to set conditions before he opens his mouth. People don't have to stay. Reporters don't have to cover the speech.

But at the high school, no one mentioned the rule. The two reporters recording the speech had no idea they might offend the justice. They were, in fact, sitting right in front of him, in

plain view of the speaker and the entire audience.

That's when the deputy marshal moved in and started grabbing their gear. A newspaper reporter gave up her tape and got it back only after erasing it. The AP reporter refused to give her digital recorder up, so the marshal grabbed it, demanding "the tape."

The deputy apparently didn't understand that digital recorders don't have tape, but the wire service reporter eventually showed her how to erase the memory.

The justice, ironically, was talking about the U.S. Constitution and the rights we enjoy under it.

One of those is supposed to be due process under law. Police and federal agents are not supposed to take the law into their own hands.

Usually, a high official caught in this kind of trap just bulls his or her way through. It's unheard of for someone to apologize for this kind of mistake.

Maybe the justice realized that bad publicity might harm his changes of being promoted to chief justice. Maybe he realized that he had made a mistake.

Maybe he just thought an apology — and a change of heart — was the right thing to do.

That would be sort of novel in Washington, but it could happen.

Whatever the case, Mr. Scalia did the right thing and we all are better off for it.

It shows that if you believe in justice and the Constitution, things might just work out.

Hooray for common sense!

— Steve Haynes



Why don't we pray for enemies?

"But, I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

— Matthew 5:44.

In church, we pray for those we love, those who are sick, our leaders, our families and ourselves.

Why don't we ever pray for people who hate us, or people we dislike?

There's nothing wrong with praying for your aunt who has cancer or for our parents and grandparents who have died.

It's not a bad thing to pray for the president, governor and mayor. They need all the help they can get. The same goes for ministers, priests and other clergy.

Petitions for health and prosperity for ourselves may be a little self-seeking, but we were told to ask.

And there's certainly nothing wrong with asking for help when we have a big test, when our marriage is in trouble, when we have a problem we don't know how to solve or when we're sick or lonely or desperate.

These are all good things.

But why don't we pray for Osama bin Laden? Now there's a guy who needs more help than you, me or the entire U.S. Army can provide.

The same goes for Kim Chong-il, the leader of North Korea. He has an



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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inferiority complex that would scare anyone. He needs lots of help, and a little divine guidance wouldn't hurt.

These are the "bad guys." We don't like them because they have hurt and killed people. They hate us just because we exist.

They're not "nice folks" and no one would want them to live in the neighborhood.

But that's not the point. We don't have to like them or what they do. Maybe we need to pray that they will stop hating and hurting both themselves and others.

The same thing goes for the little hurts, discomforts, annoyances and pains in life, too.

Next time you step on a piece of gum on the sidewalk, pray for the kid who spit it out.

Think nice thoughts, even if it kills you, about the people who mow their lawn at 6 a.m., allow their dog to do its job on your grass or steal your lawn ornaments.

Anger, hurt, resentment and hate don't seem to hurt anyone but the one who is angry, hurt, resentful or hateful.

The person who mows his lawn early just wants his grass to look nice, and he's an early bird. The kid with the gum and the dog owner are thoughtless, not malicious. And maybe the person who stole those lawn ornaments has a really ugly place they need to brighten up.

Just let go. Say, "I wish they hadn't done that, but that's OK," and get on with your life.

As for bin Laden and Kim Chong-il, give them a good, long prayer. Boy, do they need it!

From the Bible

For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. Hebrews 3:4

Answer for abuse? He's been there

To the Editor:

Hello, my name is Larry Screen. I was born and raised in the Oberlin community, graduating from Decatur Community High in 1976, and now live and work in Salina. I have never spoken out on any subject, but I feel compelled to respond to last week's editorial, "Domestic Abuse Gets Attention," in *The Oberlin Herald*.

I want to share with you the driving force behind my writing this letter: God's grace, as I feel compassion for the family experiencing the crisis reported in the April 21 edition of *The Herald*. My compassion stems from my experience as an abusive person, having abused my wife and children. The damage from my behavior led to my wife and I separating and a strained relationship with my children. I offer my testimony, one of hope and love, to this family and any others experiencing this situation, to seek help. I pray they receive the support and love from their communities which they desperately need.

I have been an angry person for a long time — as long as I can remember, actually — and I tried to hide that rage from public view. This just fueled my anger. I looked for ways to deal with my feelings, choosing alcohol and sex, and I found these were not solutions, but rather, just perpetuated my problems. I was living my life in fear that someone would find out my "secret" and think I was a terrible person, confirming my own opinion of myself. This behavior became a vicious

Letter to the Editor

circle of anger, denial and fear.

I married and had children, two sons, now 20 and 16. During the years, my inability to deal with my anger in a healthy manner eventually led to abuse. After these incidents, I felt remorse and vowed to "never do it again," thinking I could use my willpower to overcome my anger and rage. This strategy failed and led to more anger for me, accompanied with feelings of poor self-esteem. In my soul, I knew I had a problem, but I refused to admit it and seek help. Even God tried to assure me by telling me He loved me, but I continued in denial.

Eventually my wife, fearing for her emotional and physical safety, but most importantly our children's, had me removed from our home and filed for separate maintenance.

I thought I was at rock bottom. Recognizing that I was at a crossroads in my life, I decided I could either seek genuine help or continue my downward spiral, knowing that if I descended much further it would lead to death, physical and spiritual.

Finally, I took responsibility for my actions and sought help, but where would I get the help I needed? I had tried counseling in the past and felt that would lead to repeated failure, which I could not afford.

Guess what happened? God in His love placed people in my life who helped me find healing. I am

now using these God-given resources with counseling to heal and recognize this will be a life-long endeavor for me.

I have discovered what I originally thought would be terrible when my secret was revealed became the most rewarding opportunity of my life. I paraphrase: what I had done as evil, God, using the Holy Spirit in me, is using it for good (see Genesis 50:20).

Mr. Haynes, I thank you for your efforts in bringing the topic of domestic abuse "out of the closet" and the opportunity for me to have a voice. Originally, I thought about chastising you for pointing out this problem without offering a better solution than, "The way to keep your name out of that part of the paper is to stay out of trouble." But I apologize for being hasty, as I only had to look a few inches or so to the left to the "From the Bible" verse located adjacent to your editorial to see THE solution: "Thou art the God that does wonders; thou hast declared thy strength among the people (Psalms 77:14)."

In closing, I ask everyone to join in keeping the victims and perpetrators of domestic violence in our prayers. I am including my e-mail address at the bottom so anyone who is interested can contact me.

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Their life strictly for the birds

Ever notice how our lives evolve in stages?

We seem to be in an "avian" stage. Jim brought chickens into our lives when we were first married.

I came home from work one day to find 100 baby chicks happily ensconced in an old refrigerator carton in our bedroom. For two weeks, I went to sleep listening to the "cheep, cheep, cheep" of the little layers. That is what I wanted to say to my husband for not buying an incubator. "Cheep. Cheep. Cheep!"

We still have chickens and probably will as long as we have little grandchildren who like to "pick the eggs." And I have become accustomed to nice, fresh eggs that actually look and taste like eggs. I might use store-bought eggs for baking, but for deviled eggs and fried eggs, you can't beat one from your own chickens.

Last year, we added two ducks to the mix. When cold weather moved in, we moved Mr. and Mrs. Duck to the chicken coop, which is pretty weather-tight. He made it through the winter just fine, but she did not survive.

Without a rooster in the pen, Mr. Duck thinks he needs to fill that position. So much so, that Jim said he's going to change his name to a combination of the two species, a chicken and a duck. Ladies and gentlemen, meet "Chuck".

My weekly check on Mrs. Robin revealed she is down to one egg. I don't have a clue as to what happened to the other one. No sign of a shell or anything in the nest.

One thing I do know, is that we



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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will NEVER have birds in the house. No canaries, no parrots, no macaws. They are OK for other people, and friends who have birds love them. But birds and their mess are not for me.

Besides, Jim says that after I've driven the car while eating sunflower seeds, it looks like a parrot has been there anyway.

—ob—

This beautiful spring has given everyone the gardening bug. I've already planted petunias in our barrels on Main Street. They should look pretty good by Memorial Day, which is when the little town we live in really spruces up.

Every year, former residents return for family gatherings, alumni reunions and services at the cemeteries. In preparation, our little town pulls out all the stops and has a clean-up day, encouraging every homeowner to "spiff things up." It's as good a reason as any, and most folks try to comply.

I have to admit that this little town has some dandy houses. Some day I hope to count mine among them. For now, though, we just try to keep the grass mowed, a few flowers blooming and plant new trees every

year.

I took a little side trip this morning and read some from my mother's book, "Out With the Kansas Hillbillies." The excerpt was dated May 5, 1949. Here's what she wrote almost 55 years ago:

"As we see another of the boys getting out of high school (my brother Don, I think) this year, we notice again how fast the years are slipping away. If they would all stay at home until they are about 25 years old, we might get some fence fixed, but that's not to be expected — or even wished. I guess it's lucky we had the baby (me) when we did; at least we know we can't be left alone for several years yet. What if we had stopped our family with just one or two?"

It's always interesting to go back and note my mother's perspective on things. Like most mothers of high school seniors, she wanted her children to stay home "just a little longer" but knew, deep down, that wasn't the scheme of things.

Some things don't change. But, if we as parents have done our jobs right, our children will want to leave. It's the nature of things.

Writer wants Harvey Girl information

To the Editor:

My name is Marisa Brandt, and I'm a doctoral candidate at the University of Minnesota. My dissertation looks at the Harvey Girls, and at the ways in which they and the Fred Harvey company forged a new image of what it meant to be a "lady."

Between 1878 and 1948, the Harvey Co. established a chain of railroad restaurants from Kansas to California. Harvey Houses, as they came to be called, set new standards for fine dining in the West. The women who worked in these restaurants — popularly known as Harvey

Girls — were widely recognized as one of the restaurants' chief draws.

I'm writing because I would like to make contact with descendants of women who were Harvey Girls between 1878 and 1910 and hope that a mention of my project in *The Oberlin Herald* might encourage some folks to get in touch with me. I'm especially interested in diaries and letters from that time, and of course in interviewing relatives of

Harvey Girls from the turn of the century.

Contact Marisa Brandt, Department of History, 614 Social Sciences Tower, University of Minnesota, 267 19th Ave. South, Minneapolis, Minn., 55455.

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