

DNA sample database like fingerprints, mugs

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



Colorado campers getting soggy

It's raining. It's pouring. It's wonderful.

Unfortunately, I'm on vacation in southern Colorado.

I shouldn't say unfortunately; they need moisture out here as bad as we do. There are no forest fires going on around here right now, but one earlier this year burned hundreds of acres and caused traffic jams on the highway over La Veta Pass because of the smoke and ash.

The rain isn't bothering us. We just wait for a break and run out for a quick walk. The rest of the time, we sit around and read, shop in town, work around the house, play cards and listen to baseball games on the radio.

The sun will come out. I'm sure of it. Then we'll be able to get out into the woods to go for our walks, go fishing and do outdoor-type things.

The folks I feel sorry for are those who are trying to camp out.

It's just not much fun to be tent camping when its raining day and night.

Your clothes are wet. Your bed is



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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wet. You can't start a fire to cook and conditions are generally miserable.

You have to be really crazy to enjoy that kind of vacation.

The others I feel sorry for are the rich.

We went out to a posh guest ranch for dinner the other night. Steve owed me a fancy dinner out and this place takes a few folks from town in the restaurant along with their guests, who pay about \$300 a person per day to enjoy the outdoor experience and three fancy meals a day.

The restaurant has a top-notch chef and the food was excellent, but the waitress told us that it had been raining every day for more than a

week, which had made the horse-back riding, backpacking, fishing and boating a bit dicey, not to mention camp, for the folks forking out the big bucks.

I was really amazed at the number of people, many from Europe — we heard at least three languages during supper — who can afford to pay that kind of money to take their families to the mountains for a week or two.

Back when we were young and took the kids to Colorado, we were the ones sitting out in the rain with no fire and wet clothes.

The kids loved it, but then I always said they were crazy.

Calendar helps with fast pace

Short of hanging a notepad and pencil around my neck to jot down things Taylor says, I'll never remember everything.

I just know that when I was 7, I never said, "G'ma, I'm thirsty. I think I'm getting dehydrated."

Or, when I got after her for dawdling over her breakfast she said, "I'm sorry. I just got distracted by the TV."

We set a pretty fast pace, so there's no time for writing notes. Taylor notices it, too. She said, "So, G'ma, what's my schedule this week?"

I tried to do the first week "by the seat of my pants," finding someone to keep her each day. When a young mother of three said, "Oh, don't you have a calendar?" I realized I needed to get organized.

She showed me the planning calendar she keeps for her family's activities. With the precision of a general moving his army, this mother had every camp, every activity, every day charted for every child. And yet she made it look effortless, with plenty of free time, too. The light bulb went off. I went on-line and printed off a blank calendar.

I've planned ahead and now, I pencil in her schedule. Taylor knows (and, so do I) where she's supposed to be each day. We still have a few open slots, but they're filling up fast.

—ob—

One of the things I hope happens while I have Taylor this month is for her parents to have some special time for themselves. It might have



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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come too late, though. Taylor's mother, Kara, said the second night Taylor was gone she asked her husband, Adam, "What do you want to do?"

"I don't know. What do you want to do?" he answered.

She said, "I don't know. Whatever you want to do."

He said, "Taylor's not here to play with. I don't know what to do."

Yes, I think they needed a break. This is my advice to young parents: Make sure you have a life apart from your children. If you plan it right, they will be outside your home a lot longer than they will be in it.

—ob—

We had a long phone visit with Jennifer, our daughter in San Antonio, who is having a baby soon. The due date is less than two weeks away and Jennifer is so ready to not be pregnant anymore. She said every-

thing is ready for little Aniston. The bedding is washed and her "come-home-from-the-hospital" outfit is laid out. I hope Jennifer remembered to pack her own bag.

Time is running out. I need to hurry up and get those receiving blankets finished.

From the Bible

And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

Genesis 45: 4, 5

Write

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must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

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THE OBERLIN HERALD

Serving Oberlin and Decatur County since 1879

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Published each Wednesday by Haynes Publishing Co., 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749. Periodicals mail postage paid at Oberlin, Kan. 67749.

Steve and Cynthia Haynes, publishers
Official newspaper of Oberlin, Jennings, Norcatur, Dresden and Decatur County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, Colorado Press Association, Nebraska Press Association and Inland Press Association.

Subscriptions: One year, \$33 (tax included) in Decatur, Norton, Rawlins, Sheridan, Thomas and Red Willow counties; \$38 (tax included) elsewhere in Kansas; \$42 elsewhere in the U.S. Foreign subscriptions, \$50-\$250 (in US dollars only) extra per year (except APO/FPO). POSTMASTER: Send change of address to 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749-2243.

Office hours: 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri. (Also open most Saturdays when someone is in.)



Distraction more than phones

The City of Lawrence, in the People's Republic of Douglas County, proposes to ban all conversation on cell phones by drivers, whether they are holding the phone or using a hands-free setup.

Council members are pushing an agenda that claims it's not handling the phone that distracts drivers, just talking to someone.

There may be some truth to that, but as cell phone companies rightfully point out, the city is not proposing to ban the hundreds of other things that can distract drivers.

Cell phones are merely the newest and most popular distraction we face. If we ban them, there still will be the car radio, lunch, the tape deck, the CD player, two-way radios and hot coffee.

Oh, and did we mention, kids in the back seat?

"He touched me, Mom."

"Because she had her hand in my space."

"Children, if I have to stop this car ..."

OK, distractions make for bad driving. I admit, I get a little hinkey when I see some woman driving down the street, cradling a cell phone to her ear, yelling at the kids



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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in the back seat, driving with one hand and flipping someone off with the other.

I'd be the first to go along with a ban on hand-held phones in the car. Hands-free kits of one kind or another start with a simple ear bud at \$5.95.

But mobile phones have become important communications tools, not just in this country, but around the world.

Sometimes I think we way over-use them — and I'll put myself in that category many days. People look silly walking down the street or sitting in a restaurant talking on the phone.

But we can't eliminate distraction from driving. I had a wreck once — hit a deer — because the kids wanted me to change the tape in the car. I looked down to see where to put the

tape, and the deer jumped in front of me.

Music, kids, the control panel — maybe I would have hit the deer anyway, and maybe if I hadn't have been distracted, I'd have stopped in time to avoid it.

Are we going to ban all those other distractions — eating a burger, drinking coffee, talking on the CB?

We should ban talking two-way radios. It can't be safe to be holding a mike while driving. I'm thinking police officers are endangering us, talking to the dispatcher all the time. And it can't be safe to have a conversation during a high-speed chase.

No, this is just another silly attempt by the nanny do-gooders who want to pass laws to protect us from ourselves to make life more complicated.

Count on Lawrence to be out front, leading the way.

Readers enjoys Herald over 50 years

To the Editor:

We decided to give our son, John Burke Kump, a subscription to *The Oberlin Herald* as a 45th birthday gift. He is a loyal fan of both Oberlin and your newspaper, as are we.

John and his siblings visited his grandparents, Lee and Hazel Kump, every year of their lives until they were out of college and married. Great memories we all have of those years!

Please tell Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts that I look forward to reading

Letter to the Editor

her column every week. I admired her mother's writing and am delighted with hers, too. Some day, when we are back in Oberlin, I hope I can come in and meet you, Carolyn.

Warren grew up in Oberlin and then went on to KU for medical school. He practiced radiology in

Minneapolis, Minn., for 40 years. We have been married for 55 years and retired for 10. Your newspaper has been coming to us, I believe, ever since we were married. We both love it.

Patty Kump
Golden Valley, Minn.

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