

## Will police taking blood nick away at freedoms?

A federal program has police and prosecutors in Idaho and Texas drawing blood samples in the field for alcohol testing.

Officials say they hope to cut down on the number of drunk-driving cases that go to trial, but the program raises constitutional questions and frankly, it's just a little bit creepy.

In Arizona, the Phoenix Police Department has been taking blood from drivers who refuse a breath test for several years.

There, however, blood is taken from drivers who agree to the test after being told the alternative could be to lose their license for a year. For the few who still won't comply, officers can get a search warrant from the on-call judge and take the sample by force if necessary.

Under the pilot program in Idaho, however, officers are authorized to use force without bothering to get a warrant. They can call other officers over to hold a suspect down for the draw. Officials say the procedure meets standards set by the state and U.S. Supreme Courts.

No one's in favor of drunk driving, of course. But the specter of officers pinning drivers to the hood of their cars for forcible blood tests may be a bit much.

Police have used blood tests for people who refuse a breath scan for years. Normally, though, they have to get a warrant and take the driver to a hospital. By the time the blood is drawn, which can be hours later, the suspect's blood-alcohol level may well have gone down.

In Idaho, 20 percent of the drivers stopped

for drunk driving refuse a breath test, which is slightly under the national average. Most of these people hire a lawyer and go to trial, challenging the evidence at every turn. That's their right under the Constitution.

Federal and state officials involved in the pilot project say their aim is to reduce the number of trials by taking blood in the field. Officers have to pass training used by regular phlebotomists, workers trained to draw blood at a hospital or clinic. They learn safety and sanitation procedures and blood-letting techniques.

Not everyone is thrilled with the idea of cops taking blood samples on the hoods of patrol cruisers.

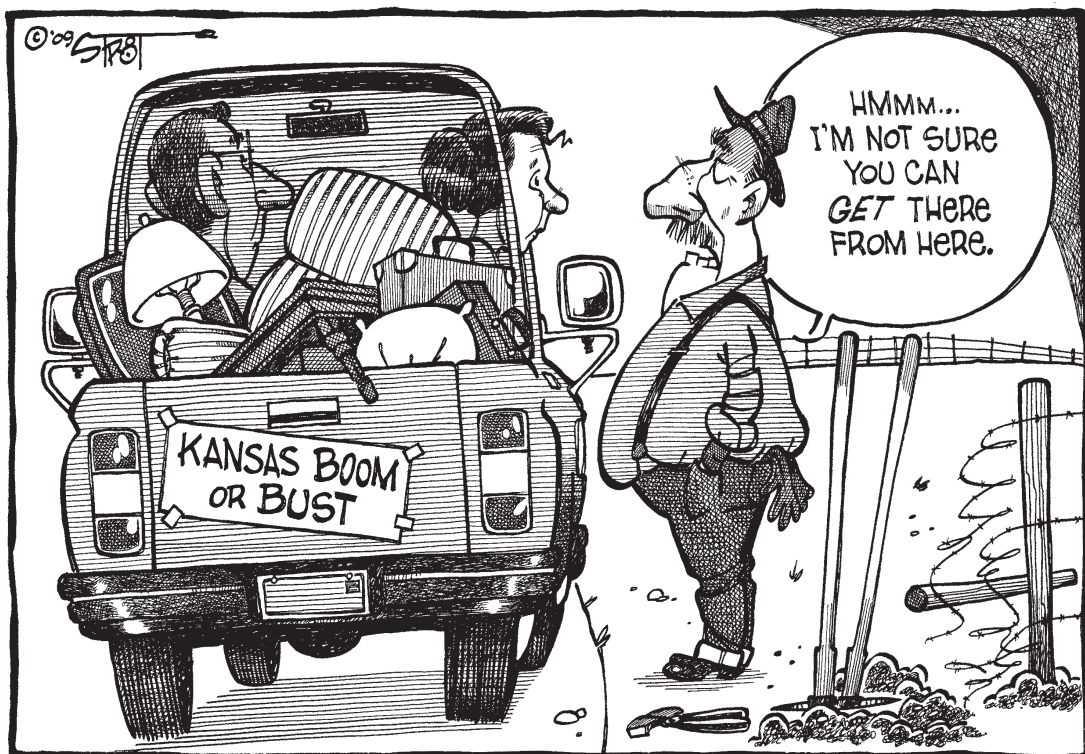
In Phoenix, for instance, drivers are taken in to a precinct station or to a mobile booking van for the test.

The tests are not perfect. Police have to preserve the chain of evidence so vials don't get mixed up and be careful to properly store blood, which can ferment, increasing the alcohol content, if it gets warm. A medical error could result in illness and a lawsuit, and officers themselves stand some risk from the blood.

Maybe this is a step forward in the drive to eliminate drunk driving. But the very idea of police holding people down and taking blood against their will seems like something out of a science-fiction movie.

Somewhere along the way, Americans may want to ask if the ends do justify the means.

— Steve Haynes



## Town touts first Mardi Gras

Mardi Gras. It's a party. Everyone is enjoying the parades, the masks, the balls the royalty, the food and the drink.

Welcome to Mobile, Ala. "What, where?" you say. "What happened to New Orleans?"

Nothing. New Orleans still does its thing, a little bit louder and a whole lot bawdier, but here in Mobile, the annual pre-Lent party has been going on for more than 300 years.

The first Mardi Gras was celebrated in 1703 at Twenty-Seven Mile Bluff, the first settlement in Mobile, according to the historians at the Mobile Carnival Museum. So this port city proudly proclaims itself as "the birthplace of Mardi Gras."

We were in Mobile for the annual National Newspaper Association convention last month, and several friends and I had the opportunity to visit the museum, which is part classic exhibits, part hands-on fun and part party central.

In the hands-on area, we got to board a mock float and see what its like to rock down the street. There were even beads to throw to those waiting their turn. We put our faces in the painted wood figures of the



## Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes  
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king and queen. Unfortunately, I'm too short for either of them. There was also a dress-up area for children complete with masks, feather boas, fancy clothes and hats. I was all for that, but my friends were ready to move along.

In the museum proper we looked over the robes, crowns and scepters of the royalty. Each year, the king chooses his queen from amongst the city's debutantes.

Actually, every year, there are two kings and two queens — one set white and one black. We asked if this wasn't a little outdated, but were told that this was a tradition stretching back as far as anyone can remember and there are no plans to change it.

Inoted from the names that many of the queens were sisters, mothers and grandmothers. This is truly a society party in Mobile, and look-

ing at the pictures and a video, it's a much more family-oriented celebration than the one in upstart New Orleans.

After looking at dozens of robes, I was feeling a little overwhelmed and about sparkled out. Each king and queen gets a new robe made for him or her and, it seemed, a lot of their mothers were ready to get them out of the house. I can understand that. I still have stuff from my children, and the last one left home 10 years ago.

I liked the gift shop best. Of course, that's true in just about every museum I've ever been in, from Chicago to Los Angeles.

I wanted one of those boas but settled for a string of beads with an alligator on the end.

Now all I have to do is return to Mobile next spring and enjoy the festivities.

## Autumn took a wrong turn

Did I blink and miss fall? What happened to the weeks of rustling leaves and cool, crisp days?

We awakened Saturday morning to snow. What's up with that? Our kids in Texas said, "It's hard to be you."

Oh, I'm confident that we'll have lots more nice weather before winter really sets in. But I sure wasn't ready to pull out the winter clothes.

-ob-

Even my grandchildren know I'm gullible.

I answered the phone Sunday evening and this little wavering voice said, "Grandma?"

"Yes, who's this?" I said.

I could hear the tears when she said, "Taylor."

Besides running for student council president, 10-year old Taylor has been nominated to participate in an honor student program in Canada this summer. I knew her interview had been scheduled for that day.

I asked her how she was, and she said she was "fine."

"You don't sound fine," I said. "Are you sure everything's OK?"

She started sobbing. "Oh, Grandma. My interview was today."

I sat down. I knew this would be a long consoling session.

"What happened, honey?" I asked in my most understanding, sympathetic tone.

The crying got worse and I couldn't understand what she said. "What did you say?" I asked.

She did a complete about-face and



## Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
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started laughing. "Oh, Grandma. I got in. I'm going to Canada! I was just teasing you."

"Oh, you little stinker," I said. "Don't do that to Grandma."

She told me one of the questions asked was, "Have you ever spent any time away from home without your parents?"

Taylor told them about her summers at our house and the interviewer said, "So, you wouldn't have any problem being away from your parents for the 15 days?"

"Not at all," was Taylor's answer.

Oh my. I can't even begin to imagine the things my grandchildren will see and do.

-ob-

Sunday, I felt like I had been through a preaching marathon by the time the day was over. Jim is often asked to fill the pulpit for a vacationing, sick or otherwise absent minister. Sunday, he preached at one little country church at 9 a.m., another at 11 and finally at prison chapel services at 1:30 p.m.

Now, I know he was the one doing all the "work," but I had to sit

and act like I had never heard the sermon before. Actually, that wasn't too hard. Jim never delivers a message the same way twice. Anyway, I always hear something new every time he speaks.

-ob-

The countdown is on for our departure for Mexico. We've had a couple of cancellations, so if you ever thought about going on a mission trip, now's the time. Get your passport and give me a call.

## From the Bible

And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

Revelation 14:15-16

## Columbus no longer revered

Once the vaunted discoverer of America, Christopher Columbus today just can't get no respect.

It's been a long time since 1492.

It started with protest counter-marches on Columbus Day, the federal holiday which used to be celebrated by parades, speeches and events. The American Indian Movement and others led protests of the Columbus tradition, sometimes threatening to mix it up with Italian-Americans and other groups who still celebrated the great explorer.

And while we learned in grade school that Columbus discovered the so-called "New World," later we learned that Norse mariners may have been here years before. They didn't claim any territory or make much of a written record.

And their public-relations machine may not have been as well-oiled as the Spanish crown's.

Spain, on the other hand, moved to establish an empire, subjugate the natives and bring them to Christ. In the understanding of European society in that day, it was the thing to do. Then, of course, there's the gold. Always the gold.

As for Columbus, later we learned he might never have fully understood his "discovery." He was looking for an all-water route to the East Indies, target of much spice and silk trade, and so called the Native Americans "Indians."

History does not record him as a kind or benevolent colonial ruler. Revisionists have riddled the common view of Spanish rule in general.

For years, Columbus was a hero to Americans. Because of his heri-



## Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes  
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tage, Italian-Americans especially looked up to him. He became the namesake for the Catholic Church's main social order for men. After all, he discovered the New World.

Today, school children learn about his flaws, the fact that he was "lost," his treatment of the natives. Perhaps as many learn to revile him as revere him.

"How can you discover a place where people already lived?" one wag asks.

It was hardly a new world to those Columbus saw as "Indians."

It's true, he brought them Christianity, as well as small pox and venereal disease, but those are hardly gifts they sought.

Now that we've seen his feet of clay, though, it seems that we should be able to appreciate Columbus for the visionary he was. No one else had the persistence to find backing and launch a voyage of discovery. Having failed at home, he set out for Spain, where visions of riches influenced the royals.

Most great discoveries involve more than a little luck. Many are found on the way to other things, goals that often as not are never met. That Columbus "discovered" a world that Europeans knew nothing of, not the spice islands he was

looking for, hardly matters.

He changed the course of history, proved you could sail west to landfall and turned Europe's eyes to the "New" world. From that sprang the colonial movement, the birth of America and the spread of democratic thinking, all great shifts in Western thought.

It would have happened without him, of course, but maybe not the same way. Someone had to set out across the Atlantic. Columbus just happened to be the one.

That it was no picnic for anyone in the way should be no surprise. The drive for conquest had ruled European history before being exported to the Americas.

Someone might argue that the East Indians were just lucky Columbus didn't find them. There's no way to prove anything, for history turned out the way it did.

And history has been revised to fit our modern-day vision of ethical behavior, a quantum shift from 15th century Spain.

Hero or heel, discoverer or just lost, Columbus changed the world. Think of that next October when you come home from work on the second Monday, and there's no mail.

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## Writer unhappy with coverage

To the Editor:

I am writing in reference to the Sept. 23 issue of *The Oberlin Herald*, the "OH!" section. Such a disappointment I suffered with the coverage of Decatur Community High School Homecoming coverage. The picture of the boy "playing his drum" with the marching band takes up more space (9 inches by 12) on the page than the whole article "Community Celebrates with Homecoming (4 by 6). In fact, it took half the page. What's wrong with this picture? Is this the most important part of Homecoming? I don't think so!

Royalty is hardly mentioned. It's such a great honor to be chosen by your school. What about school

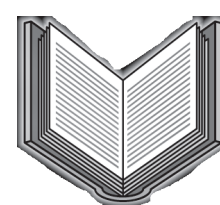
## Letter to the Editor

spirit in our wonderful town of Oberlin? It should not be downplayed.

The Homecoming victory was back on Page 6A. That should have had "top billing." That victory should have been "right here" (with arrow pointing to drummer photo). Or at least royalty should have had first mention if sports had to be in sports page.

Many in the community must surely agree with me. Where was your thinking? Please give it more thought.

Lola Diederich



Cape Coral, Fla.

Editor's Note: I guess we thought a full page, plus a story the week before and the lead sports story was pretty good coverage. The queen's picture appeared on the OH! Page.

— Steve Haynes