

Court rules it's OK to sneak onto your drive

A federal appeals court says it's OK for the police to slip into your yard or home and slip a global positioning device onto your car.

The court ruled that federal drug agents had not violated a suspected drug dealer's rights when they snuck into his driveway at night and attached a GPS recording device to his Jeep.

In court, the agents testified that the Jeep visited sites where marijuana was grown, linking the defendant to the crimes.

The judges of the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled twice, a three-judge panel, and later the full court, that the GPS logs could be used as evidence.

Though some, including the chief judge, dissented, the court ruled that there's no reason agents would need a warrant to attach the device to the Jeep.

The dissenters said they believed, however, that the man's rights had been violated. One judge called the technique "creepy," the agents crawling under the man's car in the night.

The tactic itself is nothing new. Cops have been attaching bugs, beepers and tracking devices to suspects' cars for years. It's just that the technology has gotten a lot more sophisticated. GPS devices using today's software can project trips onto a map, showing exactly where a vehicle went.

Truth of the matter is, most of us are recording the same information all the time. Agents would need a warrant to get most of that, however, so there is a difference. We think.

Cell phones can track the bearer by block and mile. Your phone, when on, talks to the nearest tower continually. How did you think the computer finds you when someone calls? It has to know where you are. It remembers.

Newer phones have GPS technology; they talk with the satellite system and record positions — if you turn that feature on.

This gives them the ability to broadcast your location to the 911 operator in an emergency, but your phone is quite capable of remembering where you've been.

And remember, your phone tracks every call you make, to whom and where.

And the sweet-talking GPS in your car? Of course, it remembers where you've been all week as well.

Notice those little blue lines going down the streets around your house.

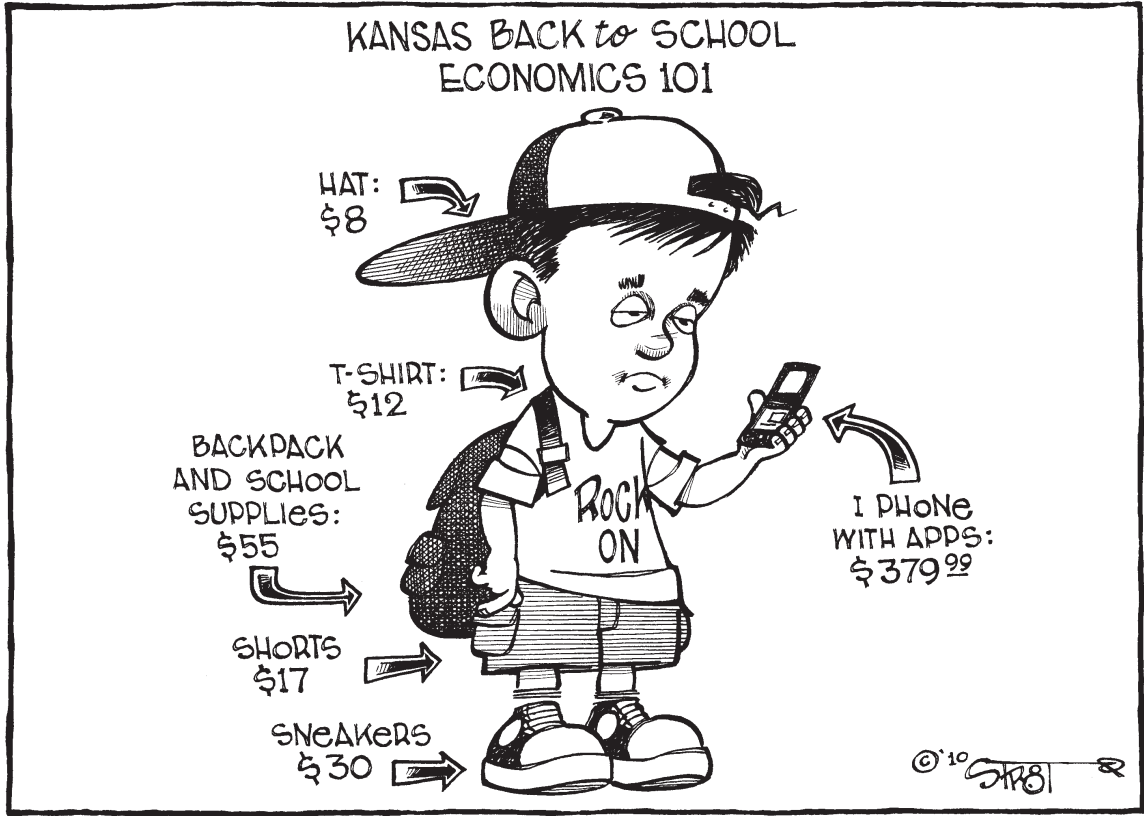
If the government subpoenas your Garmin, you'd better hope you stopped only at the grocery, not the drug dealer's house — or your girlfriend's.

So with everyone recording their every move, do we have any expectation of privacy? With surveillance cameras at every store and on every corner?

Still, we can't agree that federal agents should be able to sneak into your driveway and bug your car without a warrant. That is creepy.

And so much a sign of our times.

— Steve Haynes



Memory lingers of little girl



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
s.haynes@nwkansas.com

Faith.

I remembered a smiling kindergarten, wispy blonde hair, ever present smile.

By the time I saw her dad last week, they'd had her funeral.

Shrapnel from a rocket-propelled grenade found her in an Army intelligence compound in Iskandariya, Iraq, not that long before her deployment would have been over. Ironically, she followed the last of the U.S. "combat" brigades home.

Her family had not thought Faith Hinkley would be a soldier. She headed off to the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs after high school graduation, looking for a career. When she came home and said that might be in the Army, I don't think her parents were thrilled.

Yet, by all accounts, Sgt. Hinkley was a good soldier. She worked in "human" intelligence, interviewing Iraqi women. The general who spoke at her funeral said she helped track down materials used to make "improvised explosive devices" to kill American troops and Iraqi civilians.

She was good at her job. Her commander wrote that her score topped the promotion list for sergeant, a rank she was advanced to postmortem. The Army also gave her a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. They'll be treasured forever by her family, I'm sure.

A week later, her dad, David, admitted he was still in a daze. We have known each other for years, worked together at Rotary Club

functions. He was my eye doctor back in Colorado.

David and Faith's mom had flown to Dover, Del., to meet her casket. The response when they got back to the San Luis Valley of southern Colorado, he said, was amazing.

Hundreds of people lined the highways from the Alamosa airport to her home in Monte Vista. State troopers, police and sheriff's officers, Patriot Guards, veterans, kids and elders, just plain people saluted her casket. Firemen used two aerial rigs to hoist a giant flag over the road to the state veterans home.

"We couldn't believe the response," her dad said later. Neither could the general, a hardened veteran who admitted it was his first funeral detail.

"People called and wrote from all over the state," David said. "All over the country."

Friends posted nearly 200 photos on her Facebook page. Comments on her "wall" run for pages. A Google search produces 10 pages.

From the airport to the First Presbyterian Church in Monte Vista, where she grew up, they saluted. They jammed the high school gym-

nasium where she'd played, trained, been a cheerleader, danced at the prom. The governor was there, a senator, legislators and leaders, nearly everyone in town, strangers and friends.

The general said kind words, praised Faith as a hero. A letter from her commanding officer said as much.

The newspaper said her dad thanked the crowd, and said how, when she told the family she wanted to join the Army, he'd suggested maybe she think of something else.

"What if everyone had that attitude?" he recalled her saying. "Who would serve our country?"

The honor guard loaded her casket on a fire engine for the last few miles to the veterans home cemetery. More salutes. More words.

In the quiet days that followed, her family had to come to terms with the reality of it all. Faith might be a hero, a soldier and a professional, but she was gone, a life ended all too soon at 23.

"Someday, maybe I'll understand," David said. "Someday, I know I will."

Transfer didn't go smoothly

For inspiration, I moved my WebTV unit to the kitchen, in front of the picture window.

OK. That's just a little fib. I was actually going to move it into what will (someday) be the home office. The kitchen breakfast bar is as far as I got.

Not only is the office, which was once my closet, not empty but, I was too far into the project when I remembered there is no phone jack in that room.

And, I certainly did not have enough phone line to run from the closet/office, through the library and across to the north wall of the kitchen to the nearest jack.

That's the real reason I'm writing this with the keyboard balanced on my lap while I perch on one of the kitchen stools.

An inspiration I'm getting from looking out the window is the evidence that summer is waning. The grass is starting to get that wilted look, and some leaves have begun to turn color. Some have even drifted to the ground.

The other inspiration I get is looking at the south side of our little rental house next door and remembering I'd promised the two sisters who live there that I will paint the place this summer.

Jim set up the scaffolding last week, so now it's up to me.

I showed the ladies some paint choices and we agreed to keep it in the "blue" family. They have been wonderful tenants and we want them to stay.

Another inspirational view I get out the window is a clear shot of my tomato patch. We've eaten them as fast as we can but, they've managed



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
quality-pro@webtv.net

to get ahead of us. There's nothing left but to can some of them. Besides, they will be great in goulash this winter.

Ahh, winter. Right now, that almost sounds good. This has been such a brutal summer that snow would be a welcome relief.

OK, maybe, "welcome" is taking it a little too far.

Something else I just noticed in my kitchen: one of the cats has found herself a cozy corner above the cabinets, behind a sunflower arrangement.

She peeks out every now and then to check on me. I'm afraid to scold her for fear she might overreact and knock down some of my "pretties." Short of electrifying the top of the refrigerator, which is her access route, I don't know how to keep her down.

-ob-

After several days at our house, Don DelMonte, the cowboy who got sidelined here, has resumed his journey. He traded horses with a rancher he met before he arrived here and will ride that horse to the state line.

The rancher will meet him there and they will trade horses once again.

If he can keep to his schedule, he hopes to be through the Rockies

before snow flies.

He was a big personality guy and fit right in.

He pitched in and helped with chores, always picked up his plate from the table and said "please" and "thank you." Can't ask for a better house guest than that.

-ob-

This is going to be a busy week. I have a trip to Florida planned with my oldest brother, Bob, to see our sister Kathryn, who moved to Orlando a few months ago.

Not only do I have to pack and get things ready for Jim while I'm away, but I have several feature stories to finish, tomatoes to can, blood to donate, the Haven House to get ready, Bible study to prepare for and another column to write.

Sounds like a lot but, you know what I always say: "You know how to eat an elephant? One bite at a time."

From the Bible

You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.
Isaiah 26:3 (NIV)

Woman wants ideas for town

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

Local residents, past residents and natives of Decatur County, I, Wilma May, implore you to help save our town and surrounding communities from fading away.

Our small towns have many things going for us, which include friendly and helpful people, nice well-kept homes and faithful merchants. If you take time to look around, you will see nice houses, some being restored, and some getting new siding, new shingles, beautiful flower gardens and trees. The Good Samaritan Center, Cedar Living Center, Wheat Ridge Terrace, Ward Drug Store, the county health department, the Decatur County Hospital and the chiropractic and medical clinics combine many services to offer a full health-care delivery for all ages.

Our towns are easy to drive in and our county seat offers a wonderful museum, the historic LandMark Inn and recreation opportunities at nearby Sappa Park, with progress being

made on the wetlands project.

The Gateway center provides a great place for professional entertainers, as well as our own musicians and actors and offers a spacious arena for family reunions and anniversary and wedding receptions. Many small towns do not offer these amenities, along with a modern library, summer recreation program and swim team. Our many churches reach out to meet your spiritual needs.

Our downtown and highway business owners, along with the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce, help sponsor many events such as the upcoming 125th Anniversary celebration for the City of Oberlin in October. The intersection of two major highways within our county should be a strong point, as we are nearly halfway between I-70 and I-80. Our newest commu-

nity improvement, which caters to both senior citizens and youths, is the Golden Age Center, Sunflower Cinema and bowling alley complex which is projected to be completed by the end of the year.

We are trying to keep our communities viable, but there are many out there who once lived in our county and who could help us in many ways. Many of you have benefited from our schools and have successful careers to show for it. Don't forget about your roots.

There are many more positive things about our small town, but you should be getting the picture. If you know of ways to help Oberlin, Norcat, Jennings and Dresden survive, please make your ideas known so there will always be something to come home to.

Wilma May Oberlin

THE OBERLIN HERALD

Serving Oberlin and Decatur County since 1879

USPS 401-600

170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749-2243

Phone: (785) 475-2206 Fax (785) 475-2800

E-mail: oberlin.herald@nwkansas.com

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

Steve and Cynthia Haynes, publishers
Official newspaper of Oberlin, Jennings, Norcat, 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, \$38 (tax included) in Decatur, Norton, Rawlins, Sheridan, Thomas and Red Willow counties; \$42 (tax included) elsewhere in Kansas; \$48 elsewhere in the U.S. Foreign subscriptions, \$50-\$250 (in U.S. 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.

Nor'West Newspapers

STAFF

Steve Haynes editor
Kimberly Davis managing editor
Mary Lou Olson society editor
Carolyn Kelley-Plotts columnist
Joan Betts historian
Cynthia Haynes business manager
Pat Cozad want ads/circulation
Tim Davis advertising representative
Leslie Nolette advertising makeup



Sirens disrupt peace and quiet

To the Editor:

The weather has been beautiful lately, those long, hot day of summer are finally shorter and, oh, the cool nights. It's been great sleeping with the windows open and cool breezes float through the room.

Well, except for last night around 1:30 a.m., there was an ambulance run. The lights and siren woke us up and we sat straight up in bed. It was full blast, and we just looked at each other until the ambulance made its way down the street and finally subsided.

I finally said, "I wonder what the residents in Cedar Living Center and the patients in the hospital think about that?"

I was reminded of my stay in the hospital, when I was awakened by the ambulance in the middle of the night. It's hard to sleep in a hospital anyway.

We do understand why they need to have the sirens running through town. We live in a huge metropolis spanning miles, and there are so

many people here the traffic must be horrible at that time of the morning. I don't know how they seem to manage their way to the highway. We ponder on this often.

The lights flashing on the walls of the room are bad enough; sometimes we feel we are in a discotheque! That can't be helped, but the grandkids didn't enjoy it at all. It was around 2 a.m., and there was a run and the sirens blaring and lights flashing and the girls screaming, "Gramma, gramma." They were 2 and 3 at the time and it took me an hour to calm them down and get them back to sleep. Such is the price we pay for living in such a big city.

I was told hospitals are quiet zones. I know our hospital zone is not posted, but it is anything but quiet: Doors slamming, people talking, cars driving by with stereos blaring, truck deliveries. Some is expected and some is tolerated.

This is not to say that we don't appreciate our emergency medical team. They provide great service

and they help so many people. These are wonderful, giving people who drop what they are doing day or night to serve the community.

But let's imagine for a moment we don't live in a metropolis. We just live in a small town, and it's a hospital zone where there are sick patients, a nursing home for the elderly a residential area where people are all sleeping. It's the middle of the night, the windows are open and there's a nice cool breeze floating through the room.

Pamela Scribner, Oberlin
PS: By the way, we live across from the ambulance barn.

