

Laws requiring an ID threaten citizens’ liberty

Here’s what’s wrong with tough, new immigration laws adopted in several states, and with a new Kansas law designed to stop “voter fraud” by forcing people to show a photo ID at the polls.

Both, by the way, are creations of our new secretary of state, Kris Kobach. He helped write both the pioneering Arizona immigration law and the Kansas voter ID law.

Mr. Kobach got elected on a platform of “stopping voter fraud,” though neither he nor anyone else has been able to show the state ever had a problem. Many think it’s Kobach who’s the fraud.

The Arizona law directs police to determine if people they deal with are in the country illegally. That’s tricky, at best, because American citizens are not required to carry identification, except for the law about having a driver’s license on you when driving.

That means a police officer cannot legally ask to see your ID unless you are driving. It’s simply not a requirement in this country, nor should it be in a free society, to carry “papers.” That is what has separated us from many a dictatorship, even from many democracies.

So, when enforcing the anti-immigration law, how are police supposed to tell immigrants – who are required to carry documents – from the rest of us? By the color of their skin? It’s touchy territory, with no simple answer to the question.

Why states should concern themselves with immigration is an open question. The federal government, which has the responsibility, has

failed miserably. That is certain. But without federal backing, it’s doubtful the states can do much better.

Meantime, we run the risk of slipping into a police-state mentality, driven by concerns for border security and keeping transportation safe from terrorists. Federal agents already skirt the law, intimidating people into showing ID when they could legally decline. The Border Patrol is active in searching buses, trains and planes within the U.S. and taking down people’s names, which are then entered into a master federal database.

Most citizens do not know they can simply refuse these demands, and officers are good at making them feel they’ll be in trouble if they don’t. Many city and county law enforcement officers do the same thing when they want to search a car.

The question here is not whether we want to do something about illegal immigration. Everyone should agree that a functioning immigration system would be to our advantage.

The question is, rather, do we want to slip into a police state, where citizens have to account for their actions and movements at the demand of any officer? Or do we want to maintain the precious freedoms our ancestors – and lately, our friends and neighbors – fought so valiantly to win?

If American citizens and voters do not answer this question soon, it will be too late. The security apparatus wants ever to grow and increase its power at our expense.

What is your answer? – *Steve Haynes*

New toy bring her old shows

So here I am, writing this while watching old episodes of “Glee” on my new Kindle Fire.

I had never seen the show before, but have to admit it’s kinda cute, sort of like a hip-hop version of “Fame.” This is like a flashback to high school days, when I would watch television while doing my homework. Now granted, I never made the honor roll (much to my mother’s chagrin), but my homework was always done, and I never missed an episode of “The Dick VanDyke Show.”

Jim and I gave ourselves an early Christmas present with the Kindle. It’s something we talked about for a long time, and finally did it. But I’m still reading the owner’s manual, because this thing does so much more than I really understand.

It has the Weather Channel, Facebook, e-mail, practically every movie ever made, thousands of books, videos and music. And apps I have no idea what they even are.

We’ve downloaded a couple of books and some songs into it. It’s nice to have in the car, because we can read aloud to each other, the screen is lighted and the print is big enough Mr. Magoo could read it.

I’m going to download a couple of movies to take on the road when we head south in a couple of days.

-ob-

I shouldn’t admit this, but I went “dumpster diving” again this week. It never ceases to amaze me what people throw in the garbage. What caught my eye was what looked like a bag of dog food. It was. A brand-



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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new, unopened bag of name-brand dog food.

My friends who rescue dogs were the beneficiaries of that find. While I was getting the dog food, I dug a little deeper in the pile. Here’s what I found: a brand-new curtain rod, a cool-looking planter and a large oval mirror.

It’s not that I really needed any of those things, but I know people who can use every piece I rescued. A little soap and water, and they’ll be good as new.

The point of this is: if you have something you no longer want, but it still has some life left in it, don’t pitch it in the trash. Take it to one of the many thrift stores in the area. They will find a new home for it.

It makes me think that some people have never had to do without if they are willing to throw away usable items. I hope they never fall on hard times: they won’t be able to handle it.

-ob-

The candy and cookie factory at the Plotts house is about to shut down for another year. I’m going to make myself fix two more batches of caramel corn, one more batch of fudge and some mini banana

bread, then “stick a fork in me; I’m done.”

I love Christmas, even though I always take on more than I can accomplish. I wouldn’t have it any other way. It’s part of this special time. So, from our house to yours, we wish you a very Merry Christmas.



From the Bible

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

– *Luke 2: 1 and 11*



Remodel scatters her kitchen

It’s my own fault, and I shouldn’t complain, since I’m getting a lot of great exercise and I don’t even have to go outside.

We’re redoing our kitchen.

This has been a long-term project, starting with talking to the bank more than a year ago, then picking out everything from new cabinet materials to flooring to the tile for the backsplash.

The first big hurdle was getting the money. Steve and our banker navigated us through the process of refinancing the house. Now, with the money for the project in a special account, we’re ready for new cabinets.

The cabinets were ordered the morning of the day the cabinet-maker had a fire. The fire didn’t destroy the business, but it did set everything back pending cleanup and equipment repair.

By then, it was time to go see our daughters – and granddaughter – in Augusta, Ga. We were afraid that the cabinets would be ready while we were gone, so we cleaned everything out of the old ones and moved the telephone table and a desk that would no longer have a home in the kitchen to other rooms.

Before we left, we very carefully set up our microwave, toaster and coffee maker on a desk in the little



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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bedroom just off the kitchen. It would be a tight space, but useful during the transition. We could make coffee and toast each morning and heat up leftovers for lunch or supper.

The bedroom wasn’t ideal, since it’s carpeted and has way too much junk in it already, but it’s close to the kitchen, where the stove, refrigerator and sink are.

Our timing was a little off, however. We returned home to find the old cabinets still up and everything needed for cooking stored in the basement of a small downstairs bedroom.

I soon moved the coffee maker back out to the kitchen, but cooking has been, shall we say, interesting.

I decided to make garlic toast one morning. This small chore required bread from the fridge, a pan from under the stove, butter from the fridge – all easy so far, and in the kitchen.

Now I needed garlic powder, which was in the basement; plates from the bedroom; and a butter knife, back to the bedroom.

You can imagine the steps required to actually cook a meal. Everything is somewhere, and I don’t necessarily remember where that is. Every meal requires five to six trips to the basement and a dozen or so to the bedroom for something or other.

The old cabinets are in the garage now, and the new are being installed this week. Monday, they turned the water off in the kitchen, so we’ll be eating out until at least Thursday. It’s an interesting challenge.

Theoretically, by Christmas I will have new cabinets, a new microwave, new disposer and new sink. In the meantime, Santa has given me a great exercise program – stairs are supposed to be good for the legs – and something to look forward to.

‘Elfkins’ continue a report

To the Editor:

We Elfkins went back up to our heavenly workshop to share with Wise and Loving Father Elf, Brother Elf and Mother Elf all the wonderful things people were doing for each other and all the kind and friendly people in Oberlin. Our little Elfkin hearts were filled with wonder.

Father Elf wisely said, “We all need to realize how important each of us are. We all have a part in helping and each of us is needed to connect the dots of the loving circle.”

Mother Elf chimed in and said, “It takes everyone to build a strong community. To live together we must treat each other with mutual respect and care.”

Brother Elf agreed, “We do need each other to make everything work together for the common good. We must be willing to adjust and accept new and fresh ideas. We must be patient with others and though we may be of different temperaments, we can work together in unity and peace.”

Our hearts soared within us in glee when we realized there was a good spirit in everyone in Oberlin. As we did our reports and talked to many people at businesses, workshops, care facilities, the hospital, the Golden Age Center, the bowling alley, theater, museum, Chamber of Commerce building, the elementary school and high school, places of worship, eateries and many various places as people are just talking on the brick streets, every place we went, people talked to us and said, “This word, which was used to describe these people. We wouldn’t believe how many people do this! They do not get paid; they just want

Letters to the Editor

to help make things better. They are so humble and think that they don’t do that much.”

“Please,” said Wise and Loving Father Elf, Mother Elf and Brother Elf, “Tell us what their names are that do these good deeds, filling needs.”

Little Elfkin Sister said gleefully, “They sound just like me! They are called volunteers!”

Volunteers care so much for people and their community. They just want things to run smoother and better for everyone. Everyone counts, whether they are young or old. They are willing to work hard, love more and give of themselves to help wherever they can. Volunteers are engaged and committed to the call of great love and personal sacrifice on their part.

We looked down on the town of Oberlin, and we heard a new song being sung – with sleigh bells ringing in the background. The most brilliant star overlooked the inhabitants and a magnificent, lofty, brilliant light stood as a sentry watching over the townsfolk. The round-globe street lamps were glistering, with Christmas lights strung on both sides of the red brick main streets. Houses, buildings and other places were decorated beautifully in anticipation of hope; the remembrance of the Baby Jesus, the Christ Child’s birth in the manger.

Father Elf wondered how many people actually volunteer. We responded as best as little Elfkins could, the number was too great to

count! We started, but the number grew and grew so big, we lost count. Loving Father Elf laughed with us, and we all sighed because our hearts were so full of joy and happy for the dear people in the Oberlin area.

We handed in three reports about volunteering, from school Superintendent Duane Dorshorst, from Decatur Tomorrow, with its action teams that combine volunteer committees of seven organizations into one, provided by co-convenor Deanna Castle, and from Lisa Paulson, activities director for the Good Samaritan Center.

Here is the count of volunteers we started:

Schools 10, Last Indian Raid Museum 7, Sappa Park Committee 6, Mall in the Hall committee 4, Good Samaritan Center 12, Lions Club 20, hospital 6, Golden Age Center 20, Jaycees 30, bowling alley 20, theater 10, Chamber of Commerce 4, garden club 15, Decatur Tomorrow steering committee 9, beautification committee 6, recreation program 9, communication 7, positive culture 7 and satellite groceries 3, area churches and religious groups 100 or more, religious teachers and guides 50 or more, Norcatur website 4, Norcatur event 5. And Principal Dorshorst says grade-school students start learning to volunteer in the first grade!

The list goes on. See how helping and healthy we are? We are doing very well!

Merry Christmas!

The Elfkins

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