

## A whole lot of good ideas can threaten our liberty

The following editorial, which originally ran in The Oberlin Herald on April 27, 2011, won first place for editorial writing in the National Newspaper Association Better Newspapers Contest.

Bit by bit, America drifts and slides toward becoming a high-tech police state.

Bit by bit, freedoms slip away.

And it always sounds like a good idea.

There is no enemy on the left — or on the right. The threat comes from the bureaucracy, the security apparatus, from authoritarian thinkers on either side of the aisle.

Think this is silly?

Then why are all the supposedly conservative Republicans in Topeka patting themselves on the back for passing a law forcing all Kansans to show a photo ID card before they can vote? Election fraud's never been a problem here.

What's next?

Roving checkpoints where police ask for our citizenship papers, as in some third-rate communist dictatorship from the Cold War era?

Oh, we call those drunk-driver checkpoints. Hunting license checkpoints. Drug interdiction lanes.

If you think our liberties are not fading, try to get on an airplane without your ID.

If you're stopped for some traffic infraction, notice that the officer is likely to chat you up. He may ask you where you've been or where you're going. If your answer is a little hesitant, he might ask if you'd mind him searching the car.

It's loads of fun, having your car unpacked and dismantled while you sit beside the road.

The other day, Homeland Security agents swept in and took over the train depot in Savannah, Ga. They stopped and searched anyone who entered, whether they intended to board a train or not.

Who knows if the Transportation Security Administration even has that kind of authority. But rail security sounds like a good idea.

Government computers track your move-

ments, your bank accounts, much of your life. And the government can access private computers — at the phone company or the bank or the credit-card company, the airlines, a hundred other firms — and track the rest of your ways.

All of this is done, of course, for the best of reasons. For our own good.

Airport security is vital in the age of terrorism. Transportation Security agents, someone points out, have never caught a terrorist. They have "caught" thousands of people for minor criminal offenses, however.

Isn't election security "vital to democracy?" How did we ever get by without it for two centuries. Still, it sound like "a good idea." Same for "enhanced" border security, with computers tracking not only the comings and goings of foreigners, but of Americans as well.

Your bank is under orders to track your finances, especially any cash you might come across, and report you if you exceed certain limits. You might be a criminal, a drug dealer or a tax evader, after all.

And we all want them caught, right?

But when does "enhanced" security begin to impinge on our rights, especially the right to privacy? When is enough security way too much?

Will we wake up one morning and find out that, instead of the government serving us, with all those computers, cameras, records and files, that we must serve the government?

If that day comes, when it comes, it will be far too late to complain. Records will be made; action taken.

No, the time to defend liberty, as always, is today. Each policy, from the grossly misnamed "Patriot Act," to the latest "voter security" laws, needs to be questioned.

The best level of government involvement in our lives is the least possible. We need to avoid the point where ever-tighter security of all kinds becomes a straightjacket for America.

Ask questions today, not tomorrow.

— Steve Haynes



## Produce taking over kitchen

Peaches, watermelon, honeydew, cantaloupe, tomatoes and bing cherries, plus onions, zucchini, yellow squash, sweet corn and green beans — between our garden, a roadside fruit stand and a 4-H sale, we had more produce than we knew what to do.

It was vacation time. Time to go for a nice, relaxing 10 days in Colorado. So I asked a friend to come by and check the garden while we were gone. Then I picked all the squash, beans and tomatoes that were anywhere near ready to go.

As we were ready to leave town, I got the call that the half case of peaches I had ordered several months ago from a 4-H'er had arrived. We took those with us, along with some cherries we had been eating on and hadn't finished.

At Rocky Ford we passed — or rather didn't pass — a fruit stand, and loaded up on more fresh Colorado produce. The car was beginning to look and smell like a vegetable cart, and I expected us to get fruit flies any time.

We ate fresh every day, but there are only two of us. Despite having melon for breakfast, peaches for lunch and stir fry for dinner most days, we still had some leftovers.

I grated the rest of the squash and zucchini and packed it in freezer bags — two cups of squash to a bag. That handles most recipes requiring shredded zucchini, including zucchini bread and zucchini brownies.



### Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes  
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The leftover sweet corn got chopped off the cob and frozen. It will go good in soups and cornbread later in the year.

The few leftover tomatoes went to the neighbors. Out there, the growing season is too short to grow tomatoes, and they always enjoy the fruits of our garden in the fall.

Then there were the peaches, watermelon and a cantaloupe. The watermelon would just go back home with us. I cut up the last cantaloupe to eat on the way.

The peaches were a problem. We had eaten a bunch of them with sandwiches on picnic walks and in the mornings over shortcake, but there were still about a dozen of the smaller, less pretty ones left.

I rummaged around and found a recipe for peach bread in an old cookbook put out by the American Cancer Society in 1981, "The High Country Cookbook." To spice things up, I added a little ginger and cloves to the original recipe.

It was delicious and used up seven of our leftover peaches. The rest I cut up to go with the cantaloupe on

the trip home. Here is the recipe:

- Peach Bread**  
1 1/2 cup sugar  
2 eggs  
1/2 cup shortening  
2 cups mashed fresh peaches  
2 cups flour  
1 tsp. baking powder  
1 tsp. baking soda  
1 tsp. cinnamon  
1/4 tsp. each ginger and cloves (optional)  
Pinch of salt  
1 tsp vanilla  
1/2 cup chopped nuts.

Cream sugar, eggs and shortening. Add peaches and mix. Add dry ingredients and mix lightly. Add vanilla and nuts. Pour into two greased and floured loaf pans and bake at 350 degrees for 35 to 40 minutes.

Now, that's a good way to use leftover produce, and I'm ready for the 4-H sale next year. I may get a whole case of peaches.

I just wonder if that cookbook has a watermelon recipe I can use.

## Pool group replies to councilman

To the Editor:

As the city's pool committee that has researched and worked voluntarily the last several months, we found new councilman Tim Bowen's opinions in the Aug. 19 issue of *The Oberlin Herald* uninformed and misleading to the public.

To our knowledge, Mr. Bowen has not been to a single meeting regarding the proposed new pool. Nor has he been at the council meetings, the community meeting or any of the others that have been held. If he had, then he would know the old pool cannot be "repiped and be just fine" as he said last week.

A site survey showed the old pool does not comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act nor the Virginia Graeme Baker Act. The well and slopes do not meet safety requirements under the spring board to prevent serious injuries.

Every municipal pool must have a circulation system so adequate chemicals can be maintained. At present, the two smaller pools have zero circulation and no way to control chemicals for the health and

### Letter to the Editor

safety of all swimmers.

The gutters around the large pool are not designed to filter the water back and instead, the water goes into the sewer. An excess of 2 million gallons goes down the drain each summer. That is enough to fill the present pool 15 times.

Water is constantly pumped into the pool, and this costs the city money for chemicals that go down the drain daily, along with a need to keep heating the added water. This is not efficient nor safe. The roughness of the concrete inside the pool and the apron around the pool have caused numerous injuries.

Without the adequate circulation and chemical balance, people can transmit and pick up strep throat, e-coli and a number of other contagions. This last summer saw the arrival of horsehair worms.

As a committee, we have presented reasons why a new pool is necessary, the means to achieve it

and how we as a community can do this together, without kicking the can down the road while the old pool further deteriorates and construction prices rise. Each step of the way, we have gone before the council, from being appointed as a committee to presenting all options and getting the council's permission to do so.

The council voted unanimously to allow a sales tax increase to be placed on the November ballot. We are meeting with area clubs and welcome the opportunity to present why we need to replace the pool now, the way we can do it and to answer any questions. We want the correct information out there so voters can make an informed decision.

For more on the pool, go to [www.oberlinpoolproject.org](http://www.oberlinpoolproject.org)

The Oberlin Pool Committee  
Shayla Williby, Valisha Raile,  
Erica Fortin, Susan May, Rachel Johnson and Danielle Leitner

## Kitchen tool causes trouble

My husband has a hard time understanding a woman's need to have more kitchen gadgets.

I try to tell him they are my tools. Sometimes they are "power" tools like a blender, sometimes hand tools, in the case of a garlic press or a zester. He wants to know what the heck is a "zester."

"You know that lemon meringue dessert you love so much?" I tell him. "Well, the zester is what makes it so lemony."

When I told him I wanted to buy a new microwave steamer, he wasn't sure I needed it. When I told him how much it cost, he was sure I didn't need it. This super-deluxe cooking device was being demonstrated at the county fair in one of the business booths and I knew it would revolutionize how I baked cakes, steamed vegetables and broiled chicken. With this handy unit, I knew I would save hours every day by not slaving away over a hot stove. With all the time I would save, I told him, I could begin spinning thread, weaving fabric and making all our clothes. Perhaps that's a little extreme, but you get the idea of how hard I was selling the idea.

I'm not sure what I promised, but the bottom line is I walked home with a new microwave steamer/cooker/baker/broiler. Really. I walked home. Jim said if I bought it, we couldn't afford gas anymore.

After I found the English section of the owner's manual, I was ready to begin. The first thing I tried to cook was rice. After 20 minutes, the rice was still as hard as BBs. If I had actually read the instructions, I would have learned there is a right



### Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
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way and a wrong way to put the lid on the cooker. Apparently, I had put it on the wrong way, allowing all the steam to escape, thus leaving the rice uncooked.

Next, I wanted to bake a cake. Easy enough: place the baking cone in the center of the bottom container, pour the cake batter around it; place proper lid (there are two) on top and bake 17 minutes.

Perfection! It was beautiful. I turned the cake out onto a plate, spread the icing and took off to share my masterpiece with friends. After offering samples all around I plunged the knife into the cake. Sort of. The knife got stuck, and it was only after using lots of pressure and a back-and-forth sawing motion that I was able to remove a piece of cake. Perhaps I shouldn't call it cake. Chocolate flavored styrofoam would be more appropriate. Back to the directions. Again.

None of this would have been a big deal except for one little detail. During all my experiments, I ruined my old, favorite, tried-and-true microwave steamer that I'd had for years. That old steamer cooked carrots, cauliflower, broccoli and potatoes perfectly. There were only three pieces and it was impossible

to mess it up. Unless you do what I did.

I still wanted to cook rice, and kept hitting more and more time when I noticed a peculiar odor coming from my microwave; then smoke. I had literally melted the bottom out my old steamer. Ruined the rice, too.

That was three weeks ago, and the microwave still stinks when I use it. Someday I will master the new steamer and cook complete meals just like the brochure says I can.

Admit defeat? Never!

### From the Bible

And he said, "That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man."  
— Mark 7: 20-23

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## Resident appreciates new signs

To the Editor:

I just want to say thank you to the Convention and Visitors Bureau for the new red Oberlin signs along our highways, plus the new sign at the entrance to the fairground.

They look great!

I'm also enjoying the four-way stop at the intersection of Penn and Hall. Do we have to have our stop lights?

Also, a huge thank you to all the volunteers who helped keep the rides and games going during the

fair, especially all of those who worked every night, or almost every night.

Thanks to the businesses and organizations who manned several of the booths and rides and who were so willing to do so!

Sure made our jobs easier to have people come up to the toy van and volunteer.

Also, thanks to all the football boys who showed up every morning at 7 to pick up the trash.

We really appreciate everything you guys did!

Cheryl Metcalf,  
Oberlin Amusement Authority  
board member