

Mammoth spy system a danger to our liberty?

When the president admits the government operates a massive electronic spying network which scoops up data on our phone calls, our e-mails, our Internet traffic and who knows what all else, but promises this power will be used only against our enemies, do we believe him?

We're sure he means it.

He's not too happy that the secret is out, but many assumed this was going on all along. If it's possible, then you have to figure, some government agency will be doing it. When they say they are not listening to us, just collecting data, we have to believe them, right?

And when the president says safeguards in the system ensure that it can never be used to spy on Americans, should we trust him?

No. And here's why.

We've already seen that the power of government can and will be used against domestic foes by an administration, Democrat or Republican. We need look no farther than the Internal Revenue Service, where senior managers saw nothing wrong with targeting "Tea Party"-aligned nonprofit groups that opposed the administration while green-lighting similar, but liberal-minded, agencies.

But remember Richard Nixon and his pre-Watergate enemies list? He proposed siccing the IRS on his detractors.

One of the dangers of big government is that it concentrates so much power at the hands of a relative few, while the bureaucracy makes it difficult to hold anyone accountable for abuse. The National Security Agency which runs the computer snooping programs is so secretive that Washington wags used to say the initials NSA stood for "No Such Agency."

In the coming era, what's to keep the system from turning on the citizens who paid to create it? Nothing but the integrity of those who run it, and we've already seen what that amounts to.

Lord Acton, the British historian, said, "Power corrupts, and absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely."

He also said, "And remember, where you have a concentration of power in a few hands, all too frequently, men with the mentality of gangsters get control. History has proven that."

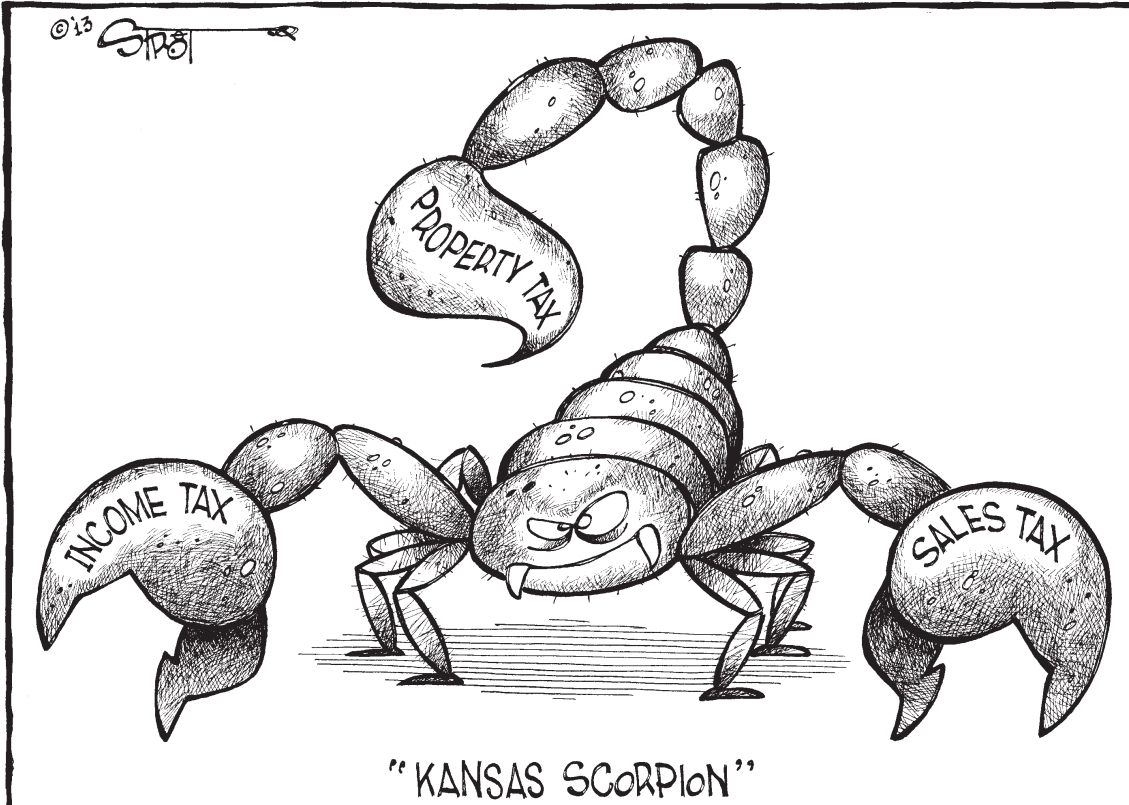
It's not that the government has designed a system to spy on those who might threaten it. It's that the system exists, and it could, almost certainly will, be turned against the people.

The same techniques built to track terrorists can and will be applied to law enforcement. Eventually, they'll be available to rogue elements, and some, like the rotten-apple IRS executives persecuting the tea partiers, or the Watergate gang, will use them.

As serious scientists gather to discuss the potential of transferring human intelligence to computer systems, it's time to realize that the electronic behemoth itself is a threat to our liberty.

Yes, we should be worried. If "they" are not listening to us today, they could be tomorrow. Such power is easy to abuse.

It's difficult to stop or even slow the advance of technology, but somewhere, somehow, we need to learn to control it and reign in its potential for abuse, to create enough transparency to allow us to know when we are the victims, before even that becomes something to be tracked. — Steve Haynes



Some like it dark, some light

After visiting all three of our children in May, I've come to the conclusion that there are two types of people in this world—cave dwellers and those who live in glass houses.

And, they are not really comfortable in each other's adobes.

It took the final trip, to see our son in Lawrence, for me to figure this out.

He's a cave dweller. All the windows in his home are covered with shades, which he never pulls up. Day and night, the inside of the house has a dim cave-like atmosphere. He seems to like it, but it drove me nuts, and it took me quite a while to figure out why.

I asked him why he kept all the windows covered, and he replied that he lived in a fish bowl otherwise. Steve, who had visited the week before, admitted that he had been having breakfast in son's kitchen with the shade up and a man in the house next door waved to him.

This obviously bothers our son. Steve just waved back and went on with his breakfast.

That's because we are the sort of people who live in glass houses. We've owned three in our more than 40 years of marriage and looking back, I realize all of them had large sunny windows which we left open as much as possible.

I guess we just don't care what the neighbors see. We don't expect people to come peeping into our windows, and our bedroom is upstairs and in the back of the house.



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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Our home in Colorado was billed as passive solar, which meant it had lots of windows on the south and few on the north. Our living room and bedroom were on the south.

In Kansas City, our living room had two sets of french doors leading out to a screened-in porch on the west side and a bright, cheery sun room on the east. We loved it.

I realized that we weren't unique while talking to Bob and Kay the other day.

Kay said that some friends go walking down their street each night. One of them told Kay that they have a running bet as to whether Kay and Bob will be watching a sporting event or a news show on television.

Bob and Kay have a wall of glass in their living room and another in their dining room. The dining room one looks out on their gorgeous backyard but the living room one gives a great view of their big television.

They don't care, I guess. They like the light.

My youngest daughter and her husband are cave dwellers.

We always knew that our son-

in-law Brad was a cave dweller. When he worked in an office, he would take out half the light bulbs overhead in his cubicle and sit all day in half darkness working on his computer. Love that boy, but I swear he's half bat.

When the couple moved into their new home, her sister noted that they never opened the curtains, even the ones where the windows looked over the back yard.

It's true. They live in a perpetual half darkness. A cozy cave. And they like it that way.

The other daughter and son-in-law chose a home with windows and a screened-in porch, where he works from home. If the weather isn't too cold or too hot—that's more common in Georgia—he takes his computer out to the screened-in porch while our work-at-home daughter takes the office with lots of open windows.

I don't know that either lifestyle is the better choice. It just depends on your point of view: Love the light or close the curtains.

'Off with 'is head,' she cried

It wasn't a hard decision to make. No straws to draw. No votes to take. No arguments to be heard. I knew immediately which one of the three roosters had to go.

I was gathering eggs one morning when I was attacked, from behind with a flurry of wings and clawed feet. One of the roosters had tried to flog (for lack of a better word) me.

Perhaps one of the hens sitting in the nesting box had clucked the message, "Help! Help! She's trying to take my eggs." I don't understand the subtleties of chicken lingo.

All I know is he came at me not once, but three times. He wasn't the least bit intimidated by my flailing arms and loud voice commanding him to "Stop that!" Not even when I tried to kick him in mid-air.

Maybe I couldn't scare him, but I knew someone who could. I stormed out of the chicken house, yelling, "Jim! Ji-i-m! Ji-i-i-i-i-m!" When I found Jim, I said, "He's got to go! That rooster tried to kill me."

Not sounding too sympathetic, Jim said, "Which one? Not the one with the long tail feather, I hope?"

"Yes," I said. "The one with the long tail feather. He's the one. And he's got to go. If you don't wring his neck, I will."

Since Jim knows I have never wrung a chicken's neck in my life, I think he decided to do it just to spare the poor bird any undue suffering. So now we're down to two roost-



Out Back
By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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A side benefit is that it's a lot quieter at our place. It seems the feathered attacker was also the one who loved to crow loudly at 4 a.m. every day. The remaining two roosters are quite subdued, and they keep a wary eye on Jim. It's as if they know that if HE comes to get one of them, it's a one way trip.

-ob-

We love tomatoes. Jim especially loves them. He eats them for breakfast. He eats them for snacks. He eats BLTs. He eats the sandwich without the "B" and the "L". He eats them with salt and pepper or plain. He eats them any way he can.

So growing our own tomatoes has become somewhat of an obsession. He has amended the soil. He's tilled and re-tilled. This summer, he built the Taj Mahal of tomato shelters.

Our tomatoes have been hailed out too many times. Oh, we've laid hail screen over the tomato cages to protect the crop, but that only made picking the tomatoes that much harder. That's why, after this year, we'll never have to face that

problem again.

I watched from the kitchen as Jim drove posts into the ground at all four corners of the tomato patch. I watched as he hauled lumber, ladder and tools to the work site. Soon, a structure began to take shape.

The four corner posts hold up a double-sloped roof line with rafters every 36 inches. Stretched from side to side, wrapped over the edge and stapled down, is heavy-duty hail screen. It's a thing of beauty.

My first thought was to put twinkle lights on it for an evening attraction. My second thought was, "If it had clear plastic wrapped around it, we would have a green house." Later, I learned that Jim had planned ahead. That was his idea in the first place, and come next spring, we can start some seeds early.

So even though we'll probably never begin to justify the expense of labor and materials, we'll have the satisfaction of never losing another tomato crop. And as Jim said, "Come hail or high water, we'll be ready."

Couple found us welcoming

To the Editor:

We stopped in Oberlin for a couple of days in mid-May to gather new information about one of our ancestors, William D. Street, who became, in 1881, the second publisher of *The Oberlin Herald*. We were overwhelmed with Oberlin's hospitality and want to extend our thanks to everyone we met during our stay.

When we dropped into *The Herald's* office, everything stopped while we were interviewed and photographed for a great article by Carolyn Plotts that appeared in the May 15 edition. We stayed at the delightful LandMark Inn, where Gary Anderson doubles as innkeeper and local history expert. He knew more

Letter to the Editor

about our family's Oberlin history than we did, and his research suggestions were invaluable.

Sharleen Wurm at the Last Indian Raid Museum let us browse freely through her materials and even loaned a file of Street documents to us overnight. The staff at the county courthouse used its expertise to find original records of land transactions and probate proceedings for us to copy. We started at the Register of Deeds and District Court offices, but eventually the sheriff and magistrate judge got roped into our project.

We even were spontaneously

invited to enjoy a piece of birthday cake and conversation to celebrate the business anniversary at Coffee, Tea & Me.

We came home from our three-week road trip with many happy memories, but our best days were in Oberlin. You should be proud of your exceptional town. Thanks again to everyone who welcomed us and made our genealogy field trip such a success.

Warren and Libby Street
Ellensburg, Wash.

Honor Roll

Welcome and thanks to these recent subscribers to *The Oberlin Herald*:

Elsewhere: Arien Gross, Baton Rouge, La.; Lynn and Donna Grone-weg, Enid, Okla.; Mrs. George Meadows, Kennewick, Wash.; Mary Anderson, Tucson, Ariz.; Fred Wilkening, Roseville, Calif.; Dale Brockhausen, Raymore, Mo.; John Andrews, Perry, Ga.

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Photo Policy

The Oberlin Herald wants to emphasize photos of people doing things in the community. If you know of an event or news happening that we should attend, please call 475-2206.

Please be sure to allow a couple of days' notice so we can arrange to be there.

Space in the paper is limited and so is the time of our staff, so we may not be able to get to every event.

Because space is so limited, we cannot run team or group photos, any pictures of people lined up or of people passing checks, certificates and the like. (We will always try to make room for a story about any of these events, however.)

We do run wedding and engagement pictures and "mug" shots with stories and obituaries, when they

are provided to us. Please remember that we need a clear, sharp picture. Dark or fuzzy prints will not work.

We cannot return photos unless you submit a self-addressed, stamped envelope with clear instructions for return. Other photos submitted may be picked up at our office within two weeks. After that, they will be disposed of.

From the Bible

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

—II Corinthians 5:17

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