



Power of secret court larger than we realize

The revelations continue about the government's secret surveillance system and the vast expansion of federal power it implies, all supervised by closed-door congressional committees and a federal court that meets – and decides – in secret.

Of course, we're assured that we have no reason to fear this system or the court that supervises it. The powers granted the government by the Patriot Act – a dangerous law with an Orwellian name – and later additions are to be used only against foreign enemies of the government.

Officials from the president down promise that only foreign intelligence targets, some of them perhaps operating within the U.S. and some of them even "U.S. persons," come under the microscope of the security net.

Not the rest of us. Having seen how easily the Internal Revenue Service, the supposedly incorruptible tax collector, can be subverted for political purposes, however, can we believe the promises of our government?

How much of a stretch is it from fighting the enemies of our government to fighting the enemies of those who happen to be running that government at any given time?

How far does the security apparatus have to bend to use these new-found powers against domestic enemies of the government?

In fact, the Patriot Act and allied laws already are used to track domestic crimes, including money laundering and tax evasion. These laws affect not just terrorists, but everyday Americans who want to open a savings account at their bank or fly on an airplane or use cash to buy something.

It's virtually illegal today to use large amounts of cash. The law presupposed that you must be doing something shady. You have to prove the opposite if the government asks, and they'll keep your cash for you meantime.

It's not just the intelligence agencies that want these powers. The tax collectors want them. The drug cops want them. All law enforcement would like to have these powers.

And if they would be used only against the bad guys, why then, who cares?

History shows that might not always be the case. Powers taken by the government tend to be used for the government's purpose, and eventually, that becomes the preservation of the government. It's but a short slide down this slippery slope to something very different.

Our country has always held the dark forces of government at bay. Now, in the name of fighting terrorists, they stand ready to take the reins.

The very thought of a secret court, making thousands of secret rulings every year, building a body of law no one ever sees, is frightening. The thought of where this could lead, more so.

The intelligence court, comprising 25 federal judges from around the country chosen by the chief justice, and meeting in a secure room at the federal courthouse in Washington, surely must be defending our rights today, despite all the snooping into phone and Internet records.

But how will we know that? And how will we know next year or the year after what has followed, when everything is done in secret?

Are the terrorists, in the end, the real threat? Will we even know when the line is crossed?

It's about time this box was opened.

— Steve Haynes



The Gardener

By Kay Melia

kvmelia@yahoo.com

For most of us who play in the dirt out in the backyard, the tomato is the reason. Sure, we enjoy a few cucumbers and some green beans. What would a good vegetable garden be without some sweet corn or carrots? Some of us even raise a little zucchini or eggplant, proving once again that people will eat just about anything green that is grown in the garden.

But the tomato is King! We love our tomatoes! We love 'em fresh most of all, but we also can them, make salsa from them, and use them in all kinds of ways almost everyday.

And so, as our gardens begin to mature here in the High Plains, every gardener's eyes are fixed on the tomato patch! We worry constantly about whether or not our plants are progressing properly. Are they getting enough water? Am I watering them too often? Should I fertilize them, and if so, with what, and when? Why aren't they setting on? How long am I going to have to wait to pick one?

The answers to many of our questions depends on the variety we chose to plant. Some varieties will yield a ripe tomato long before others. Some varieties have completely different growing habits, depending on whether they are determinate (smaller vines) or the taller growing indeterminate types.

Maturity times are further complicated by the date we set our plants out in the garden, and whether or not we caged them or simply allowed them to sprawl. To assign a definite date of maturity is not possible. One thing IS certain. The harvesting of the first tomato is a very special time of the gardening season!

Tomato plants are very shallow rooted. And so we must be aware of their need for moisture.

I've always understood that they shouldn't be watered too often, but when temperatures reach into the 90s for several successive days, I don't hesitate to water them regularly, every day if necessary. I've also learned to avoid using a lawn sprinkler anywhere near the tomato patch.

I fertilize them at least twice during the season with a water-soluble "pour-on" type of material, readily available at your garden center. The first feeding comes when the first bloom appears, and the second application comes about three weeks later. They get a third dose if they have been weather damaged.

There are many, many potential disease problems to worry about. The most serious of course is a word we just don't like to utter.

If you notice one of your plants seems to have stopped growing, and the foliage is beginning to turn a sickening gray color, you

must face the fact that you have been blighted! Watch it for a few more days, and then remove it from your garden, and carefully dump it in the landfill!

There is no practical cure for blight....we all seem to lose a few plants every summer. When you plant in the spring, ALWAYS plant varieties that are listed as showing resistance to blight. That is your best bet to avoid it.

My 30 tomato plants are looking pretty good as of the Fourth of July. No blight, yet, lots of small green tomatoes, but still about three weeks until harvest. I have Super Tasty, Northern Exposure, Shady Lady, and a couple of Burpee's new fancy schmancy Super Sauce.

I hope your garden is maturing nicely and that the plus-hundred degree temperatures will occur in gardens other than yours. And always remember...it's more enjoyable out there at 6 a.m. than it is at 2 p.m.

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Casey's Comments

By Casey McCormick

mccormickcasey@rocketmail.com



It's a gift to live in Kansas and be at the geographic center of the United States. So many interesting places are easy to reach within a day's drive.

For instance, the long, Fourth of July weekend allowed us to visit three of our kids, and their other halves, in the Kansas City area.

Our second to oldest and his wife live in Excelsior Springs, Mo. to the north-east of Kansas City.

As you might glean from the name, the town has grown around several mineral springs. During

the 19th and 20th centuries it became a popular location for healing and recreation.

Three railway lines joined there and many hotels sprang up to house the flocking visitors.

One of these, The Elms, still offers lavish accommodations and access to the mineral rich waters.

One of my favorite nuggets of trivia is, this was the hotel incumbent President Harry S. Truman stayed the night of his re-election bid in 1948. Do you remember the famous photo of a victorious Truman holding the

too quickly printed Chicago Daily Tribune that declared, "DEWEY DEFEATS TRUMAN?"

Every time we drive past the beautiful drive that leads to the entrance of The Elms I have that moment imprinted in my mind.

Excelsior Springs is just another one of the countless travel worthy spots not far from our Kansas home.

Community urged to make floats for the fair parade

Letter to the Editor:

The weekend to Celebrate St. Francis for its 125th Anniversary was a wonderful time, but remember, all of 2013 can continue to honor our community. We hope that lots of people will include floats in the fair parade that will bring back memories, etc. The Centennial parade, which was also on alumni weekend in 1988, had over 150 entries in it, including people and business from other towns.

We have the book with all the information about those entries, so if you want to find out what your family or business had in the parade, we would be happy to share it with you. You could repeat what they had, or make up something new. We also would love to see others, who were not

here, or who were not able to participate in that parade to come up with some new ideas!

Lots of creative people in our area, it will be exciting to see what they add to the parade, but it

doesn't have to be huge or artistic, just a reminder of our past. The clock is ticking, get your minds rolling.

Eddy and Sherry Schultz
St. Francis

GOD SAYS
...Know ye not that friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.
James 4:4

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STAFF
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 www.sfccfamily.com
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