

Standard-Examiner
SERVING THE TOP OF UTAH SINCE 1888

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Our view

CO monitors in Ogden homes

In March in Ogden, a young man alone in his home died. While investigating the man's death at his home, three Ogden police officers became ill and were taken to the hospital.

The cause of death was a carbon monoxide (CO) leak in the home, which had no CO detector. The death — as well as the danger the officers experienced — is, unfortunately, repeated often across the nation.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, there are hundreds of accidental carbon monoxide poisoning deaths due to the use of consumer products, and thousands of victims are treated each year in hospital emergency rooms.

"Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas that, through inhalation, causes headaches, dizziness, nausea, faintness, and at high levels, unconsciousness and death," wrote Standard-Examiner reporter Scott Schwabke in a recent news article.

Since 1984, Ogden has required that all new homes have CO detectors. They cost between \$20 and \$50 in stores. Now, on the recommendation of the city's Public Safety Advisory Committee, the Ogden City Council is considering whether it should mandate that all of the city's roughly 30,000 residences have detectors.

The city was close to approving the law last week, but has put the matter off for further study. The proposed law would require detectors within 20 feet of a bedroom door. Additional detectors would be required if bedrooms were farther apart.

The responsibility for buying, installing and testing the detectors would be on the owner of a dwelling. Proposed

finer are steep. After one warning, a fine for noncompliance would be \$125. That would double for a second offense and could eventually reach as high as \$500.

We acknowledge there may be a libertarian argument against forcing a homeowner to buy a CO detector, but this is a case where public safety must take precedence. Ogden needs a law requiring carbon monoxide detectors in all residences, particularly since it has a large percentage of older homes.

It is common sense that homeowners should have these detectors in their homes. To fail to do so can be a death warrant if a home appliance fails and emits deadly carbon monoxide. In the March death, a leak from an on-demand water heater was the culprit.

We agree with city Fire Chief Mike Mathieu, who told the Standard-Examiner, "We've had enough illness and death in our community, and we certainly don't need any more to wake us up and get our attention."

Also, it is not difficult for dwellers to get a carbon monoxide detector. More than 5,600 were recently distributed free to residents from the Ogden Fire Department. If the detector ordinance is approved, the fire department plans to buy as many as 900 detectors and give them, free of charge, to low-income residents.

One quibble with the proposed ordinance: the high fines for noncompliance. Since it is likely many who would face fines are low-income people trying to juggle bills, why not — as a penalty — provide them with a detector, and then charge them, say, \$20 for it? This would eliminate most repeat offenders and offer city officials some reimbursement for the already low bulk prices for the detectors they plan to buy.

Another view

A victory for law

After Sept. 11, 2001, the Bush administration chose to set aside the standing legal procedures and treaties for fighting this country's enemies and make up rules of its own — at the expense of violating human rights, tarnishing U.S. prestige around the world, and undermining the checks and balances of American democracy. Thursday, at last, the Supreme Court responded. In a decision with vast implications, it invalidated a major part of the administration's ad hoc system, its special trials for terrorist suspects, and rejected its exclusion of many detainees from international protections against inhumane treatment.

The 5-to-3 decision in *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld* will be controversial; indeed, legal scholars will debate its many components for years to come. In practical terms, however, it is a huge victory for fundamental American values — and one that will dramatically aid in putting the war against terrorism on a sound legal basis.

The central part of the ruling declares that the special military commissions set up on President Bush's order to try alleged members of al-Qaida are unlawful. It gives the administration a simple choice. It can proceed with cases under current law, using standard military courts-martial, which provide fuller procedural protections for the accused than do the commissions. Or it can go to Congress for specific authorization to deviate from those rules.

The holding should ensure that trials of al-Qaida detainees take place under clear rules ratified by Congress. If

Congress does its job conscientiously, any departures from normal trial rules should be both demonstrably necessary and narrow. As we have argued before, the administration has legitimate concerns about what rules of evidence should apply in these cases and how to protect sensitive intelligence information. Some accommodations may be necessary. Now, however, balancing these concerns against the accused's rights to a fair trial will not be the sole province of the administration itself but a shared responsibility of the executive and legislative branches. The results will bear the mark of democratic legitimacy: They will be law.

While trials were the principal subject of the case, the more important holding may be one the court offered in passing: that Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions covers all detentions in this conflict. The administration's long-standing contention that al-Qaida detainees are almost wholly outside of the protection of international law is, the Supreme Court says, simply wrong. The Geneva article — which requires a minimal level of humane treatment and bans "outrages upon personal dignity, in particular, humiliating and degrading treatment" — covers all detainees. This holding casts into serious legal doubt the CIA's authority to run its network of secret prisons, not to mention the highly abusive interrogation tactics it has deployed at these "black" sites. It means that there are no detentions beyond the reach of law and that those guilty of inhumane acts could be criminally liable.

— *The Washington Post*



Letters to the editor

Ogden police put community at risk

Hats off to the Ogden Police Department for standing up for what they believe in, which apparently is calling in "sick" to try and prove a point, while the South Ogden P.D., Roy P.D. and Weber County sheriff and the Utah Highway Patrol do their jobs.

The last time I checked, they didn't get paid to goof off while everyone else did their jobs for them. I thought our law enforcement community

had higher standards and morals than that.

I'm sure there is some other means of negotiating rather than a "sit out;" not to mention putting their community and their own jobs at risk.

Here they are, paid public officials, putting the public at an even higher risk.

Thanks, officers, for doing your jobs!

Steve Jones
Ogden

Council seems to be working against Ogden

What is it with the Ogden City Council? First it chases off the Ernst Health Hospital, and then council members vote against the class-A office space at "The Junction."

If people are willing to invest large amounts of money in Ogden, especially downtown, why do we treat them like this?

Why don't we find ways to work with them?

As a Realtor, I drive

through the blighted areas of Ogden all the time, and I think, "Can't something be done?" Then I watch the City Council make these astounding calls.

I'm with the author of the June 14 letter "Remove inept council members from office": If the culprits are Garcia, Safsten, Jeske and Wicks, let's lose them.

Jean Dixon
Ogden

With effort, weaknesses can be overcome

Recently while in Salt Lake City, I received a parking ticket. As I sat in my car, I felt a rage starting to rise within me.

On my drive home, I reflected on my earlier years when rage was a part of my life.

This rage is something I have always had with me, but never really acted upon it until my high school years. Three days before graduation, I was kicked out of school as a result of this rage. One year later, I was fired from a job because of my failure to control my rage.

At age 22, before my marriage, I had several episodes of rage with negative results. In my marriage, we had some differences of opinion, and I felt this rage growing within

me. I remember spending an entire morning talking to myself and recognizing that I had a weakness — something that could be controlled.

It has now been 36 years of controlling and overcoming. First I changed the concept that I was born with this behavior and there was nothing I could do about it, to realizing that it was a weakness and all weaknesses can be overcome. I succeeded in overcoming.

Much like those who are born with homosexual tendencies, once you present to your mind that you have a weakness and you want to overcome it, your mind will go to work on a way to control those desires. You, too, can succeed in overcoming your weakness.

Terry Palmer
Syracuse

Bush: A perfect example of a paradox

President Bush has been going around the country giving speeches about the need to end our dependence on foreign oil. Good for him.

How has he been doing this? He has been flying in his

gas-guzzling private jumbo jet. Of course, it has been at taxpayers' expense.

What is wrong with this picture?

Jene Smith
Layton

Roy resident pleased with garbage service

In the June 22 news story "Roy officials throw away garbage fee increase," Roy Councilman Michael Stokes indicated that the garbage collection service used by Roy was lacking. He was quoted as saying, "Their customer service begs a little improvement," suggesting residents have gotten little response when attempting to reach someone from the garbage collection company to take care of a problem.

Over the last few years, we have found just the opposite. Twice during that time our canister, along with others on our block, was missed. Both times I

called Roy city and was given the phone number for the garbage collection agency.

We had no problems communicating with the garbage collection people; they showed concern, took our address and our garbage was picked up quickly that same day. The next day we received a call back from their office to make sure the problem was resolved.

I find their service to be excellent, as is the service provided by the Roy police, fire department and recreation department.

Larry Isaacs
Roy

Be fair to those who protect us

I wonder what is going on with the Ogden City Council. I read in the newspaper about the fight the Ogden police and fire departments are having with the City Council.

I realize over the years that the police and firemen have been in disagreement with the City Council, and I hear a rumor the City Council is punishing them for standing up for their rights. I hear that many of the senior police have left the police force to work elsewhere. I understand they are the lowest paid in the area.

The police and firemen should be the highest paid. They put their lives on the block for us. As a property owner, I want protection. And we should make sure we have police and firemen who are trained and well-paid.

Why is the City Council punishing them? When is this City Council going to wake up and be fair to those who protect us?

Gordon L. Belnap
Ogden

'Smart Growth' should be 'Stop Growth'

I recently heard a KSL radio program on which Ogden Mayor Matthew Godfrey was being interviewed. At the end of the interview, he was congratulated for having his picture on a business-magazine cover. I also heard KSL editorialist Duane Cardall speak about the progressive direction Ogden is going — again with Mayor Godfrey's effort and vision.

Also, Smart Growth Ogden should really be called Stop Growth Ogden.

I take my hat off to Mayor Godfrey. He has more dreams for Ogden and has done so much for the improvement of Ogden.

Carolyn Allred
North Ogden

We must stop global warming, pollution

Please, please, please, if possible, go see a movie titled "An Inconvenient Truth." This film is a scientific portrayal of what could, and possibly will, happen to the planet Earth if warming and pollution are not reversed.

There is a sufficiency of scientific data to show the interconnection of all of the natural disasters that are occurring throughout the world. It is scary. It affects the future of all mankind.

The film is narrated and sponsored by Al Gore. Yes, if he is, in fact, running for the presidency, there are political implications involved. Forget these for the moment and concentrate on the message.

I have very little idea what ordinary citizens can do. But something needs to be done, and soon — by you and me.

Harvey Eager
North Ogden

Coming up in the:

Opinion pages

TUESDAY: An Independence Day review of this nation's Bill of Rights.

1. Letters must include your first and last name, address and a daytime telephone number.
2. All letters published must bear the author's first and last name except under extreme circumstances.
3. Letters may not exceed 250 words, and may be edited and condensed. Preference will be given to shorter letters. Due to letter volume, we regret that not all letters will be published.

4. No more than one letter from any individual will be published during a month.
5. Letters of appreciation will be published based on individual merit, as space allows. No mention of business names is allowed.
6. Consumer complaints will not be published.
7. We do not accept poetry.
8. For queries on letters, call 625-4506 or 625-4205.

9. Send letters to:
Letter to the Editor, Standard-Examiner,
P.O. Box 12790, Ogden, UT 84412-2790
Bring them to the editorial page editor's office at **332 Standard Way** in Ogden, weekdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.; fax letters to **625-4208**; or letters may be sent via e-mail to: **letters@standard.net.**

