



News Roundup

Author : Jeff Welty

Categories : [Uncategorized](#)

Tagged as : [news](#)

Date : August 23, 2013

The DWI blood test backlog at the state crime lab has started to receive media attention. The *Winston-Salem Journal* recently ran [this editorial](#), arguing that the situation is “unacceptable” and reflects a “management failure by the state.” The piece notes that the lab has trouble retaining analysts, who often receive more lucrative offers in the private sector, and endorses the idea of allowing analysts to testify by video rather than in person. (Jessie explored the legality of that option [here](#) and [here](#).) [Update: Judge Joe John, the director of the lab, wrote a letter to the *Journal* responding to the editorial. It is available [here](#).]

In other news:

Former DA pleads guilty. Former District Attorney Rex Gore pled guilty this week to a misdemeanor charge based on improper travel reimbursements Gore authorized for an assistant district attorney. Gore received a suspended sentence, a \$5,000 fine, and a six-month suspension of his law license. The *Fayetteville Observer* has the details [here](#).

Federal court hearing on Central Prison abuse claims. WRAL reports [here](#) on a recent federal court hearing in a lawsuit by inmates against Central Prison staff. The prisoners claim that guards routinely took inmates to “blind spots” not reached by surveillance cameras and beat them severely. The hearing appears to have been some type of preliminary proceeding, and no merits ruling was issued. The judge did, however, order the installation of additional cameras and required longer retention periods for the resulting video footage.

No drugs for lethal injection? There are . . . alternatives. Sentencing Law and Policy has a post [here](#) about the shortage of the drugs heretofore used for lethal injection. The basic problem is that drug manufacturers won’t sell their drugs to be used in executions. Some states are looking at switching drugs to ones that are much more widely available, but law professor Robert Blecker argues [here](#) on CNN that a more dramatic change is in order: the return of the firing squad. He writes that he “oppose[s] lethal injection . . . not because these untried new drugs might arbitrarily cause pain, but because . . . [l]ethal injection conflates punishment with medicine. The condemned dies in a gurney, wrapped in white sheets . . . monitored by sophisticated medical devices. . . . [L]ethal injection appears, feels, and seems medical, although its sole purpose is to kill.” The firing squad, by contrast, appears, feels, and seems like exactly what it is.

Supreme Court offspring, unite! The Blog of Legal Times notes [here](#) that Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher has just hired Philip Alito, son of Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito. The firm is already home to Eugene Scalia. (You can probably put together whose kid he is.)

Not funny, but funny. High-speed chases are not funny, they’re dangerous. But [this video](#) of a high speed chase is set to silly music and somehow, that makes it kind of funny. Plus, it isn’t long and it appears that no one is hurt in the end.