

WESTWORLD



Increased airport annoyance certain in wake of bomb scare

Adriana Zalloni
World Editor

Attention all travelers: brace yourselves, because heightened airport security is on its way, thanks to an attempted alleged terrorist attack on Dec. 25, 2009.

According to www.msnbc.com, the suspect, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, 23, of Nigeria—the so-called “Underwear Bomber”—hid the explosive, pentaerythritol (PETN) in condom-like pouches that were attached to his body. However, thanks to a fortunate malfunction of the explosive, the only one injured out of the 278 passengers and the crew aboard Northwest Flight 253 was Abdulmutallab himself, who was hospitalized for severe burns.

However, the attempt sent shockwaves throughout the air safety, security and intelligence communities as politicians, pundits and citizens alike called for tighter restrictions.

According to Arthur Bell, the Assistant Federal Security Director of Screening at Chicago’s O’Hare International Airport, security will increase drastically to prevent future incidents like this one.

“Passengers traveling through airports across the United States, including O’Hare may continue to notice an increase in our measures such as enhanced random screening, behavioral detection officers, and a wider use of tools like explosive trace detection, not just at the checkpoint but throughout the airport environment,” Bell said.

After Richard Reid’s similar, failed attempt at “shoe-bombing” in 2001, it became procedural to take off one’s shoes before going through security. Later, when an aborted attempt to ignite liquids was thwarted, certain quantities of liquids were prohibited as well.

I cringe at the thought of what could come next for us. Longer security checks just add up to longer traveling time, and that just leads to more unhappy flyers.

As a frequent air traveler, I cannot help but have mixed feelings about the promise of heightened security. While I appreciate the valiant efforts to protect me and other air travelers, the only thought in my mind is, how much longer will I have to wait to board my plane now? Clearly, something in the security measures is not working, if more cases of attempted bombing incidents are reported, after the individual has already made it past the security checkpoints.

The question is: will heightened measures, no matter how stringent actually work? The terrorists always seem to be one step ahead. The only places that Transportation Security Administration personnel are not allowed to search are “private areas” of the body. So, where did Abdulmutallab hide his device? You guessed it.

Exiled radio host and *Chicago Tribune* contributor Steve Dahl could not have put it any better.

“We need to stop thinking like us and start thinking like [the terrorists],” Dahl said in his Jan. 13 commentary, “Feeling naked and alone in the security line.” Dahl added, “I am pretty sure they are counting on us not doing that.”

Until we can completely redesign airports to make things quicker and safer, these new security measures, including advanced imaging units that will help security officers detect anything out of the ordinary, are not going to protect us, rather, they are simply going to inconvenience us.

Bell recommends arriving to the airports much earlier to avoid the last-minute scramble for time that is sure to come with the heightened security. Excellent—that is all we need.

Plan to raise driving age causes controversy

Morgan Quilici
Copy Editor

“The driving age should be changed to 18. I think that teens at 16 are not mature enough to be on the road. Even though 18 year-old teenagers are only two years older, I feel like you mature a lot in those two years,” senior Kristin Koder said. “I think that changing the age to 18 will prevent injuries and save many lives.”

English teacher Lisa Denapoli qualified her support.

“I am in favor of anything that will decrease teenage deaths and injuries on the road, but I am not convinced that a new 18 year-old driver will be significantly less cautious than a new 16 year-old driver,” Denapoli said.

According to an article in www.huffingtonpost.com dated Sept. 9, 2008, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety has called on states to raise the driving age to 17 or 18.

According to the National Highway Safety Administration, more than 5,000 U.S. teens die in car crashes each year. The rate of crashes, fatal and nonfatal, per mile driven for 16-year-old drivers is almost 10 times the rate for drivers ages 30 to 59.

Nevertheless, unlike Koder and Denapoli many disagree with raising the legal driving age.

“I think the driving age should stay at 16 because it is not fair to change it now. I don’t think that two years is going to make that much of a difference,” freshman Emma Sutfin said. “Also, changing the age would take away a lot of freedom and independence from teens.”

Junior Ramsan Younatham agrees that the fairness of the change should be taken into account.



Teenage drivers may be required to wait until 18 to obtain their license. Photo courtesy MCT Campus

“I don’t think that the driving age should change. I got my license at 16 and haven’t gotten into an accident. I don’t think that good drivers should be penalized for the irresponsibility of others,” Younatham said.

At least one adult feels the same way.

“I feel the driving age should stay at 16. If a young person is able to hold down a job and earn a wage they are going to need transportation to and from the job,” special education teacher Marie Grunst said. “I think that there may be a different way of approaching the issue of safety. Maybe there needs to be more enforcement. I know they have been implementing a lot of [laws] already but perhaps they need to enforce them more regularly,” Grunst said.

Sophomore Ben Bard suggested an alternative way to test teen’s ability and readiness for the road.

“I think that as long as you are responsible you should be able to drive at any age. I think that responsibility should be the factor in deciding driving

age instead of age,” Bard said.

Grunst agrees.

“I don’t think changing [the driving age] from 16 to 18 is going to solve the problem of children’s safety,” she said. “I think parents need to take a bigger role in enforcing what their restrictions are and making sure their kids abide by the laws. If that is all done then perhaps the rate of accidents will decrease.”

Assistant to the English director and parent of a teenager Jackie Garvey added this a qualifier.

“If students in driver’s education are given more practical, defensive, anticipatory skills and are exposed to alternative solutions, I have no problem with 16-year-olds driving,” she said. “However, they need more personal training, not just throwing them behind the wheel to drive.”

Texas targets teen tanning, tries to temper tortured tissues

Adriana Zalloni
World Editor

“The new law is useless,” senior Patty Schutz said, regarding the new Texas law that states that teenagers under the age of 16 1/2 are prohibited from tanning and that teenagers under the age of 18 are required to obtain parental consent before tanning. “The salons are just going to lose a lot of business.”

Senior Jenny Finnerman disagrees.

“At that age, I would have been extremely mad; all I wanted to do was tan. Thinking about it now, the law is probably for the better,” she said.

According to www.myfoxaustin.com a new law in Texas came into effect at the start of the New Year, prohibiting any person under the age of 16 1/2 to utilize a tanning bed. Any person under the age of 18 is required to get permission from either a legal guardian or a doctor before they get into a tanning bed.

Although Illinois legislators have no current plans to enact such a law in this state, many students don’t think it would be such a bad idea. As they acquire more knowledge, surveyed students say that they become less likely to use a tanning salon.

“I don’t tan anymore,” Finnerman said. “I prefer not to get basal cell carcinoma, [the most common type of skin cancer].”

Senior Alysse Rzaszki agrees.

“I used to tan multiple times a week, but eventually you realize how ridiculous you look.”

However, some students disagree with the new law on principle.

“I may not go tanning,” junior Kirstie Beck said. “However, I feel that once you reach the age of 16, it should be up to you

or your parents to decide whether or not the teenager is allowed to go.”

Sophomore Katie Hoban agrees. “It is your own body, and you have a right to decide what to do with it.”

Freshman Isabela-Anca Tanase echoes discomfort with legislation banning the practice.

“It might be a bad idea to [implement] the law, mostly because as soon as someone [comes of age] and wants to go tanning, [(s)he] might start tanning profusely—at a greater [risk] of damaging skin,” Tanase said.

Proponents of the law cited the increased popularity of tanning among teens as a rationale for the ban, a fact reinforced by Schultz.

“I started tanning in the eighth grade,” she said.

Tanase added, “Kids are beginning to tan in both the seventh and eighth grade.”

A second tanning law will take effect this July in Texas. According to www.myfoxaustin.com, tanning salons will be required to pay a 10 percent tax on all ultra-violet tanning booth sessions. This tax will be passed on to customers. However, this tax does not apply to spray tanning booths, which makes sense to Finnerman.

“The [new law and tax] doesn’t apply to spray tanning,” Finnerman said. “It is pretty practical.”

Senior Ned McElfresh, who has researched the matter, offered his words of advice to students who still can tan legally.

“Unless you have a serious vitamin D3 deficiency, there is no benefit to a tanning booth,” McElfresh said. “Be comfortable in your skin; people are beautiful the way they are. Tanning will only lead to a future of very baggy, wrinkly skin, so if you prefer your skin to be more like pajama pants than a perfectly fitting pair of jeans, then by all means, charge the tanning booths.”

West bibliophiles express mixed emotions beholding widespread electronic magazine emergence

Morgan Quilici
Copy Editor

“I have not read [books and magazines] online before, but I am open to the idea of making [them] digital. I think it would be more convenient for people to have their favorite books and magazines at the palm of their hands,” senior Diane Wielgos said in response to published reports of increasing Internet presence for many widely read publications.

According to the *New York Observer*, more than 50 magazines including *The New Yorker*, *Vanity Fair*, *Vogue*, *Time*, *People*, *Sports Illustrated* and *O, The Oprah Magazine* will be joining together to form one of the biggest alliances among rival publishers ever in print media. The company will prepare magazines that can work on digital devices such as the iPhone™, BlackBerry™ and many other digital devices and will be available for a price though a

clearinghouse a la iTunes™. Print versions of magazines would still be available for purchase.

Students and staff have different preferences when it comes to reading as well as opinions on the new digital expansion.

“It is hard for me to read on the computer. I find myself more distracted. I guess I am an old fashioned kind of guy,” senior George Davros said. “As long as print versions are still available, then I am fine with magazines going digital. I know that there are other people out there like me so I think [magazine companies] would be losing money if they went all digital,” Davros said.

English Director Sanlida Cheng fears that magazine’s details might get lost in a digital format.

“For me, the act of reading is not just about the words. It is actually about the experience of sitting somewhere and actually touching, flipping the pages and getting lost in the moment,” Cheng said. “The pleasure of reading entails other senses. It is also about where I can get information most readily.”

Sophomore Andrew Matias finds benefits in digital reading.

“In my opinion, I think [digital magazines] could be very effective based on the society we have today. I don’t read much online now, but I think it would be very beneficial to make magazines digital,” Matias said.

The New York Times Company chairman Arthur Sulzberger Jr. recently announced that its paper will begin charge for access to its website’s content beginning in 2011. This recent news might change people’s views on whether or not they will convert to the digital format of publications.

Math teacher Sean Delahanty said he would be willing to pay for digital magazines. However, he said the act of reading hard copies of books and magazines will always continue.

“The convenience of being able to [get information] online is awesome. I think it is a great part of technology advances but I know I am still going to want something to hold and read,” Delahanty said.