

## You can't have it both ways with pornography

Of all the dumb ideas. The same people who have been trying to get grand juries to investigate porno shops down along I-70 now want the state to have a 15 or 25 percent tax on pornography. Excuse us. Wouldn't the state wind up having a vested interest in pornography, even as it has bought into gambling, liquor and other once-forbidden vices? And once hooked on the revenue, wouldn't the state then have to protect and promote its porn industry to keep the schools open? Get real. There has to be better ways to raise money for the state of Kansas. Pornography supporting our schools? Wouldn't we have a hard time telling kids not to buy the stuff if it was good enough to pay their teachers? You have to wonder what kind of world we live in when people come up with that kind of stuff. We don't have much porn up here, and it's probably just as well. In the cities, and along I-70, though, it's a flourishing trade. Why porn shops appeal to interstate travelers is a mystery, but the highways in other states are loaded with them. Kansas has but a few. That's enough to offend some people around Abilene, who have been pushing county attorneys to investigate, call a grand jury or just prosecute the stores. The Supreme Court has made it pretty difficult to prosecute porno dealers, though, and even grand juries are having a tough time finding any traction. Discouraged, perhaps, by the legal morass, the anti-porn forces came up with the tax scheme. It's similar to the way the anti-saloon movement gave up and proposed a stiff tax on liquor. You can't have it both ways, though. You're either against pornography, or you think it's a good revenue source. If the state taxes the stuff, it in effect becomes a partner with the makers. So Kansas winds up in bed with the porno industry? That's a funny place for the state to be. Our suggestion is that the state doesn't need money that badly. Let the porno shops alone. Keep them out on the freeways and out of towns, away from schools and churches. If people want to buy that stuff, in a free society, who are we to say no? But should the state have a vested interest in the porn business? No. It's not exactly clean money, is it? And Kansas has bigger fish to fry.

— Steve Haynes

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## Oh, what to wear? What to wear?

In my job as a reporter and photographer, I get to meet lots of interesting people and usually get front-row seating at any event.

Normally, I don't feel too much pressure to dress for the "occasion." We have a relaxed office where clean and tidy is the usual order of the day. But, it's not every day I get assigned to cover an appearance by Miss Kansas.

Oh, the pressure. What to wear? Will it be a good hair day? What color blush? The details are endless. Our concept of beauty queens is perfection. We think they are perfection personified. Not a hair out of place. Make-up applied perfectly.

Miss Kansas, Adrienne Rosel, is all of the above, but also a real person. My fears were founded. She was beautiful, to be sure, but she was also funny, animated, clever and entertaining. She was speaking at a school and held the kids spellbound for an hour. That's not an easy trick. Ask any teacher who's tried to keep order in a classroom.

She let the girls try on her crown, sang songs for them, answered their questions, and she even did the "splits" for them. And through it all, she wove a lesson. She impressed on the children the need for a goal and how to begin working toward that

## Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



goal.

I was impressed with our state's representative for the upcoming Miss America pageant. And, you know who I'll be cheering for.

—ob—

Speaking of our state: The Kansas Board of Education has put its collective neck on the line again. They came out with the bold stand of allowing a theory (and it's only a theory) to be questioned.

We should be proud to live in a state where controversial ideas are welcomed. Unfortunately, the media portrays Kansans in general as dullards and anyone who does not adhere to the mainstream rhetoric, in particular, as being so "out-of-it" they shouldn't even be given any consideration.

It seems like a no-brainer to allow the theory of evolution to be questioned in our

schools. If supporters are so sure it's correct, they shouldn't worry about a few questions. It's just those "tricky" little questions they don't have any answers for that seem to bother them.

For instance, they've never answered how the little bombardier beetle evolved. This creature has two chambers of volatile fluids that, when combined, explode. He is able to not only combine them at will, but also aim them at his enemies with great accuracy. How could he have evolved? During the process, wouldn't he have continually blown himself up? And there goes that whole reproduction thing. As far as I know, evolutionists believe it still takes a male and female.

Every day science is disproving long-held ideas about evolution, not to mention all the hoaxes that have been perpetrated by the "scientific" community. Remember the *National Geographic's* proclamation about the flying dinosaur? Front page stuff. When they had to print a retraction, because they had been duped, it barely filled a page buried deep within the magazine.

To all the evolutionists out there, I say your faith is a lot stronger than mine. I don't have that much.

Am I a creationist? Yes, indeed, I am.

## Potential comes back after prison stint

Every once in a while, when I'm leafing through the pile of papers in the dining room, I run across my friend Ray's graduation picture.

He sent it last year after he graduated from college down in Texas. It was a hard-won degree.

When I first met Ray, he was managing editor of a little daily newspaper out in Colorado. He had no degree or training to speak of, but he thought he could do the job as well as anyone. He probably could.

After several years, he and the owner parted ways, but I saw him now and then. When we wanted to start a paper in another Colorado town, we thought of Ray. Would he come work for us?

Well, he'd need a car. Didn't have one, didn't want to buy one. We said OK.

And we were richly rewarded for our decision.

Ray was in his element working on his own, starting that little paper from scratch and, within a year, winning nearly every award there was for journalism in Colorado.

At the state press convention that year, I thought Ray — more than a little overweight and a lot out of shape — might have a heart attack. They kept calling him back up to the front to get another plaque.

By the time he was done, Ray had the sweepstakes awards for news, photography and design, general excellence and a stack of individual writing and graphics categories.

It took three or four of us to carry all that hardware out to the car. He was that good.

With his intelligence, I think, Ray had a certain arrogance. He knew how good he was. He knew how smart he was. But, heck, with all those awards, I didn't mind.

## On the Prairie Dog

Steve Haynes



Later, a chain from Illinois came in and bought all the papers in the area, ours included. Ray stayed on for a while, but eventually drifted back to his home town.

We moved to Kansas.

What happened next is hard to fathom. Ray fell in with a biker meth gang. They were running drugs in from out of state and selling them around town. Ray allegedly kept the records.

He told me later it started out just delivering a package. He had no idea what was in it, and didn't ask.

By the time the FBI swept in, though, he was deeply involved. I think he thought selling drugs wasn't really hurting anyone. I know he thought he was smart enough to never get caught.

He's the only guy I know with one of those "nicknames" the FBI hangs on a desperado.

Unlikely desperado that he was, middle

aged, balding and fat, Ray went to jail. He got seven years hard time in federal stir, first at El Reno, Okla., no picnic there, but later at one of those country club places you read about.

We went to see him. He was doing OK, but you could tell it was no fun, stuck out there on the windswept Texas plains.

In prison, Ray found himself and he found Jesus. He started working on the college degree he never finished. He grew a garden and did chores for the warden.

Finally, he was sent to a halfway house in the city. He got a job and learned how to get back into civilian life. He told me it was stupid to cross the government, and he'd never make that mistake again.

Well, lots of people find religion in stir, and lots of people work on degrees. Lots of people say they've learned a lesson. I don't know. I hope Ray has.

It took years, but he finished college and applied to go on and get a master's. I hope that works out.

Ray has a job now, and a goal to keep him working. He's not back in journalism, and he may never be, but I think, and hope, he knows himself better.

When I see him beaming out of that graduation photo, cap firmly in place, it's easy for me to believe he'll make it.

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We do not publish form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Thank-yous should be submitted to the Want Ad desk.

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