



## Letting homosexuality out of the church closet

Homosexuality is one of the most divisive topics of our time. It affects all of us. Intelligent dialogue should be pursued. Homosexuals are persons that are sexually attracted to the same sex. Homophobics have a pronounced fear and anger towards them. I do wish to see equal access to the sympathies of our society at large. Depending on the individual localities, one side or the other gets preferential treatment.

As a Christian, my bias remains in the middle. I believe the Bible declares that the acts of homosexuals are sinful as are every other sexual act outside of marriage. There are passages in both testaments that state this. Yet God says to hate sin and love the sinner. So that's my stand.

So, why do some people hate homosexuals? Why do a percentage of them take violent action against them? Is it for religious reasons? Perhaps for the misguided few who misinterpret Scripture.

I believe it is instinct. Primal, self-preservation, un-conscience instinct. That kind of instinct is very strong. Humanity, as well as most living things are designed to procreate from two sexes, male and female. Whether you believe that God designed us that way or that is how we evolved makes no difference. Both understand human sexuality as 'nature'. It is knit into our collective human psyche that our survival as a species depends on the opposite sexes procreating. Homosexuality threatens our instinct to survive. Homosexuals cannot conceive, nor bare children (stating the obvious, I know...but necessary).

To the homophobic the homosexual is a deviant being that either will not or cannot contribute to the continuation of the species. This in and of itself is not the motivation for the intense hatred towards homosexuals. Rather it is the ever-increasing political and social acceptance and propagation of homosexuality at large that frightens the homophobic as he sees the survival of humanity being threatened.

This primarily un-conscience instinct to survive is couched in our sexuality. The anger, fear and rage of homophobics needs to be acknowledged in the public square on the same footing that the homosexual agenda has. Most homophobics seem to be men as they are progenitors and protectors of the human race.

On the other side, we are not only instinctive beings, but (hopefully) moral ones; with intelligence and the need to be social and interact with one-another. As Christians, it is simply wrong to hate individuals and wish them harm.

How does one love a homosexual while being equally repulsed by their sexuality? By the grace of God, one day at a time and an open mind towards understanding and empathizing with the homosexual.

As I have begun to do statistical research on this, I am overwhelmed by the horrendous toll the gay lifestyle takes on the health and happiness of homosexuals. Disease, depression, domestic abuse and mortality rates are generally higher than the heterosexual community. And in some cases, much higher.

So what is our response to them? What is the churches answer to this? I believe there to be people sitting in our pews in the community that struggle with same sex feelings that have nowhere to turn for help. Why is that? The church should be the first place people can turn to for guidance, understanding, prayer and help through whatever temptations and struggles they deal with. Why is homosexuality in the church closet? How can we help one-another if we don't seek to try to understand and love one-another through it all? Jesus is known as 'the friend of sinners'.

It's okay to talk about sex out-loud in church. It's written about throughout Scriptures. When was the last time you heard a sermon preached on human sexuality? It was less than a month ago for me. Our interim pastor spoke of the need for same-gender friendships based on the life of David and Jonathon. It was excellent. But we need more, much more.

Our youth have to deal with bi-sexual, homosexuals, sexual obsession, pornography (extremely graphic nowadays), 'friends with benefits', etc in a sex-crazed culture. If you're a parent of someone under thirty, ask them. The younger generation needs the stability and anchor of their elders. Their elders need to reach into the filth to understand what they have to deal with.

This isn't pleasant but it is necessary. If we love our youth, our fellow human beings and Christ himself we need to roll up our sleeves and tackle this...together. Both the homophobic and the homosexual can find peace, healing and hope in the transforming power of Jesus Christ.

The following web-sites have helped my understanding as I've begun researching this complex problem. (I am sure to be adding many more). [www.narth.com](http://www.narth.com) (National Association for Research & Therapy of Homosexuality) [www.exodusinternational.org](http://www.exodusinternational.org) (The largest information and referral ministry in the world addressing homosexual issues) A candid and concise Christian book entitled, "Christians in a Sex-Crazed Culture" by Bill Hybels is a great first read on the subject.

So...let's talk.

Robin Somers

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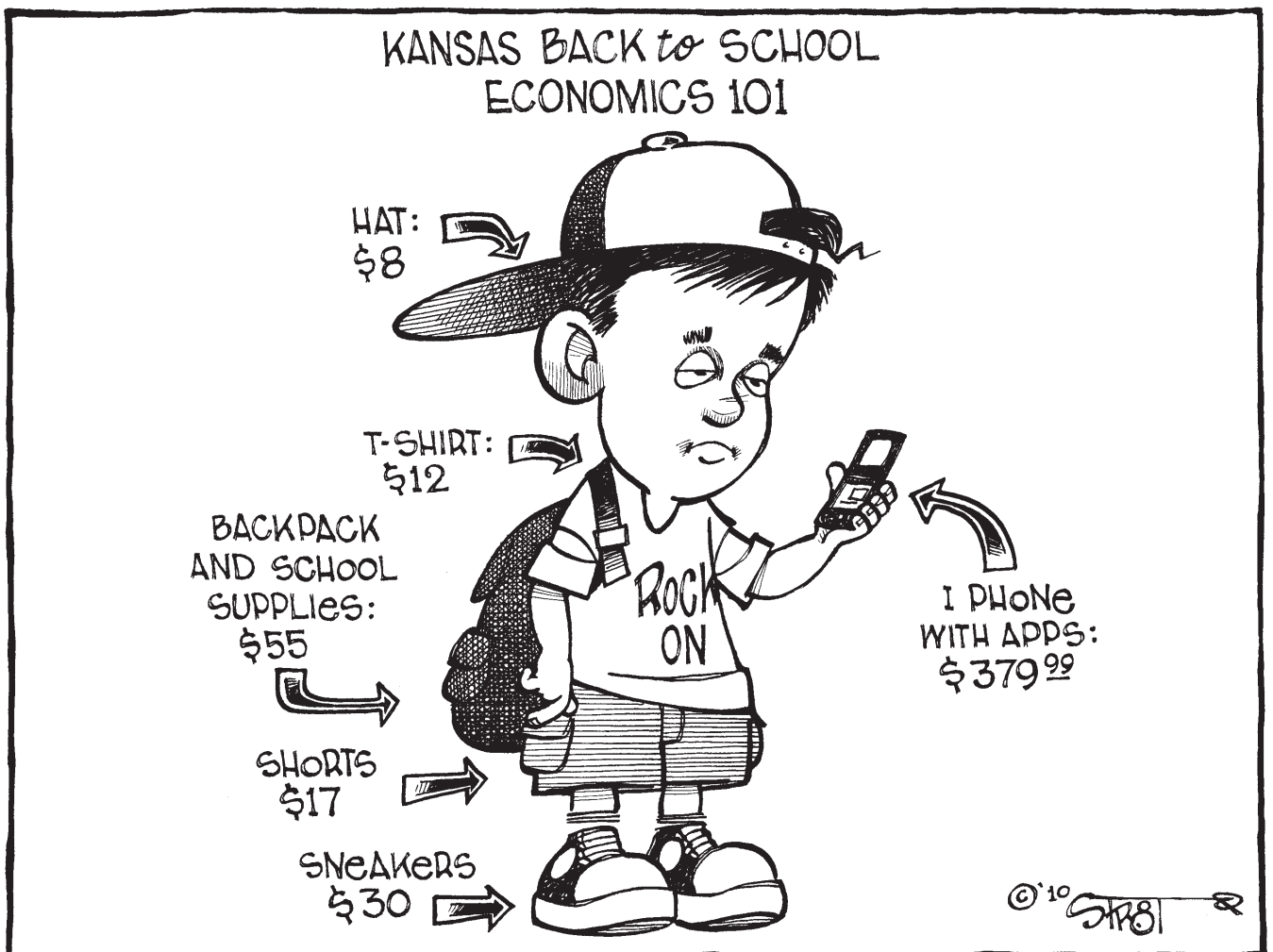
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#### STAFF



## The pros and cons of school uniforms

As I watch children (and parents) around the country prepare for school, I remember back to the years our children were young. Getting five children ready for school was both a challenge and an adventure. Our older children spent the majority of their years in Catholic schools, hence uniforms.

As I watch the 'over the top' clothes ads, the escalating cost and peer pressure, I realize what a gift I had in the form of blue corduroy. Data from 2005 shows one in four public elementary schools and one in eight public middle and senior high schools now have a school uniform policy. Most schools have dress codes of one sort or another, but it is pretty subjective. With mandatory school uniforms, it is self-explanatory.

Although there is data to indicate an improvement in school attendance, behavior, etc., the research on academics is less indicative. It would seem to me however, if you have improved attendance you would eventually see an improvement in grades. Many explain the use of uniforms much as you would explain uniforms for

sports teams; it reflects school spirit and support. In fact, statistics have shown an increase in school pride when uniforms are mandatory.

A primary argument against uniforms has always been cost; however having our children in school uniforms was considerably cheaper than standard school attire. They needed fewer clothes and our school held a uniform swap prior to the beginning of each school year. The children never wore them out as they changed immediately when they got home from school...both because it was required by me and because they wouldn't be caught dead playing in that outfit. The uniforms consisted of navy blue cords, plaid jumpers, pullover shirts and blue sweaters. The

Phase II  
Mary Kay  
Woodyard



one negative...I don't think our boys will be wearing corduroy ever again.

The second reason people give is the loss of creative expression. School is a place to grow. We think in terms of ABCs, but it involves much more than that. It is the preparation for adulthood in all its forms; knowledge, discipline, treatment of others and appropriate behavior and dress. A child's expression of self comes in many ways and is certainly not limited to school clothes. Our role as parents is to create avenues for our children to express themselves. Contrary to what the ads tell us, clothes do not make the person. I want children to enjoy school; I also want them to view school as the ultimate "playground"...the growing up training center. Children need to see being an adult has advantages and is fun.

Some parents find it difficult to set boundaries. No one is saying this is an easy transition, but I think it has positive value for everyone. Learning to "dress for success", although an old saying, has much truth to it.

## As Edna Allen Poe would see or write it

If you are paying attention you know I like little sayings and quotes. I have a tee shirt that says "Careful or you'll end up in my novel!"

I purchased it because it was as close as I could get to "column"! Whenever I get a comment on the shirt I explain it to the person if they don't know about my column. And I warn them again!

One of my friends picked an assumed name for herself. She wants to be Mindy or Wendy or something (I forgot). Something that rhymes with her real name: Cindy. Oops---Sorry Mindy-Wendy!

Another friend said if I quote her to say "my crazy school teacher friend." She has a very distinctive name but probably anyone reading the paper would not know her anyway. I've thought of a good alias for her when the time comes.

Poor Preacher Dave, I thought I was safe writing about him, until he asked me what I had said about him. Someone approached him after a funeral and asked him if he was the one I sometimes mention! We know a lot of David's: the handyman, the plumber, a friend's husband, my brother. Sometimes I have to put them into context or it gets confusing!

The only person who ever seems excited to be named in my columns is

This Too  
Shall Pass  
Nancy  
Hagman



the son-in-law. I would like everyone to think of it as he does: it's a compliment to be mentioned! But perhaps some people don't.

The other day, Preacher Dave and my crazy school teacher friend (I'm not giving away that "aka" today) were discussing the fact that they needed to watch what they say around me. Here's a hint guys: if you are going to plot against the writer you ought to do it when she is not around or she will just use it against you!

Dave then referred to me as Edna Allen Poe! HA! HA!

So what is he saying? My column is scary. It's horrifying to get mentioned?

It got me to thinking, what would I pick for a pen name or if I had to go into the witness protection program!

It's sort of funny that Dave picked Edna as that is my mother's name.

When I first started writing this column

I wanted to be anonymous. They told me no! To make up for that I was supposed to name the column, but I could not think of anything, so between the three great minds of Cynthia, Carolyn and I, we came up with BACK HOME.

That was almost six years ago---time flies when you are having fun. It never seemed quite right to me, however so you will notice I now have a new handle, "This Too Shall Pass".

It seems better because I'm not exactly serious about anything I write. It also seems important to remind my readers and my self not to take things too much to heart or agonize about life's trials. A little thought I like: "If everyone put their troubles out on a table and you could pick up someone else's you would probably take your own back."

Since I just changed the name of my column and I'm supposed to be getting a new picture (prompted by Norma Browne who told me I'm better looking in person that I am the current picture) I guess I won't change my name right now.

But if the time ever comes I just may go with Edna Allen Poe. It won't be "The Tell Tale Heart" but I do tell tales. So be careful; you have been warned!



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There is no charge to render a thumbs up; names of those providing the information are not used, only the method of transmission.

Thumbs Up is meant to honor good deeds or events around town. Thumbs Up are reviewed by Telegram staff prior to publication. Thumbs Up comments may be denied if they are not meant to honor a positive event or deed.

Thumbs up to the Norton County Horse Council for hosting Rico, the traveling horse, at the Equestrian Center. Brought in.

Thumbs up to Larry and Terry Hillman for so graciously offering their time and truck to make a delivery to the Health Department. Called in.

Thumbs up to the The Rock for providing good clean fun for our youth when there are so many negative influences around them. It looks like they all had a great time at the Luau. Emailed in.