

Opinion



Free Press Viewpoint

What are teens afraid of?

Teenagers, scared? Yeah, right.

According to the Kansas State Board of Education, sex education classes in Kansas should stress abstinence until marriage.

That's fine, nothing wrong with that.

The policy also includes that schools should provide complete, accurate information about birth control and preventing sexually transmitted diseases to students. But some fans of comprehensive sex education programs are upset over the policy. They think the policy will scare students out of having sex.

With the growth of teen pregnancies over the years, how could anyone think teens are afraid of sex? Are today's teenagers scared of anything though?

No, it's not fair to put every teenager under the same umbrella, but look at what some teenagers have done over the years.

Teenagers are the ones who sneak out of the house without their parents' permission to go drinking with their friends in some remote place, or worse yet, in someone else's house. The only fear is getting caught — not the action itself — because they know it's wrong.

Teenagers, especially the younger ones with new driver's licenses, are the ones who race down the streets and roads and don't think they will wreck — until they hit the soft spot, take the curve too fast or don't brake in time for the intersection and end up in an accident. Then they fear losing the license and having to pay for the repairs.

How could teens be afraid of sex considering what is in front of them? The teenage years are the ones when the hormones kick in. Teenage boys see cheerleaders at games wearing uniforms revealing much skin.

Depending on the enforcement of school rules, those boys see girls trying to wear some clothes. Some of those girls know they have the figure and are not afraid to flaunt it by the clothes they wear. Then there is all the sexually-themed material on television and on the Internet.

Those teens who make right, moral decisions with their bodies, including sex, are to be applauded.

It's those teens who don't think anything bad will happen to them — until a doctor tells them different — are the ones to worry about.

— John Van Nostrand, publisher Colby Free Press

Comments to any opinions expressed on this page are encouraged. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th St., Colby, Kan., 67701. Or e-mail jvannostrand@nwkansan.com or pdecker@nwkansan.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect the *Free Press*.

Where to write, call

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-4774

U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-6521

U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 2443 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. 202/225-2715 or Fax 202/225-5124

State Rep. Jim Morrison, State Capitol Building, 303 SW 10th St. Rm. 171-W, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7676 e mail: jmorrison@ink.org web: www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorrison

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol, 300 SW 10th St., Rm. 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, 785/296-7399 ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

COLBY FREE PRESS

155 W. Fifth (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963
Colby, Kan. 67701

State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout Excellence, Column Writing, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography.

Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

John Van Nostrand - Publisher

jvannostrand@nwkansan.com

NEWS

Patty Decker - Editor

pdecker@nwkansan.com

Tisha Cox - General Assignment

tcx@nwkansan.com

Jan Katz Ackerman, Area Reporter

ackermanjk@ruraltel.net

ADVERTISING

Crystal Rucker - Advertising Sales/Director

crystal@nwkansan.com

Jasmine Crotinger - Advertising Sales

jasminec@nwkansan.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Lea Bandy - Circulation Manager

lea@nwkansan.com

Jeanette Applegate - Bookkeeping & Ad Building

japplegate@nwkansan.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator

support@nwkansan.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

Jim Bowker - General Manager

Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Ron VanLoenen, Judy McKnight

THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the day observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Haynes Publishing Co., 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE is paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to The Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701. THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, closed Saturday and Sunday. MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, which is exclusively entitled to the use for publication of all news credited to it or not otherwise herein. Member Kansas Press Association, Inland Press Association and National Newspaper Association. **SUBSCRIPTION RATES:** In Colby by carrier: 4 months \$38, 8 months \$53, 12 months \$70. By mail with in Colby and the nine-county region of Thomas, Sheridan, Decatur, Rawlins, Cheyenne, Sherman, Wallace, Logan and Gove counties: 4 months \$50, 8 months \$62, 12 months \$78. Other Kansas counties: 4 months \$57, 8 months \$67, 12 months \$81. All other states, \$81, 12 months.

Nor'West Newspapers

Haynes Publishing Company



Don't fall into the trap



Patty Decker

● Deep Thoughts

John Rosemond, who is one of my favorite child psychologists, hit the nail on the head once again when he talked recently about parents making the same mistakes.

He said that while on a short vacation with his wife, the two of them went on a shopping adventure. As his wife was looking at some items, Rosemond said he struck up a conversation with a young woman who had a 15-month-old son.

According to Rosemond, the lady mentioned that she had "figured it out." Intrigued by her remark, he asked what she meant.

"Emphasize only the positive," she said. "I ignore anything negative that he does, pretend it's not happening. I only respond to good stuff and it's working very well — he's really a good kid."

Rosemond said he nodded and said something polite. In other words, he wasn't going to debate this issue.

"I wanted to tell her that she has fallen under the spell of the same psychobabble that entranced my wife and me when we first had children — the same blarney that caused the first 10 years of life in the Rosemond household to be a near-constant state of parenting perdition," he wrote in his syndicated column.

Yet, he kept his mouth shut because he knew that during his own nightmare, no one could have told him either that he was his own worst enemy.

I agree with Rosemond when he said that as a young parent, he and his wife had the best intentions and believed that it was this only that really mattered.

"I was not going to be the sort of parent my parents had been," he thought to himself while waiting for his wife to finish shopping. "I was a member of the Anointed Generation, put here to right all the wrongs that had gone before us, which included everything."

Like Rosemond, I can remember feeling like a parent that would be breaking new ground and

nothing was going to stand in my way of raising my children correctly.

During those younger years, and with my first child, it was going to be more of a democratic relationship because then the child would grow up functioning appropriately in a democratic society from the lessons learned at home.

Rosemond also referenced books to substantiate his reasoning. Books like Dorothy Briggs, "Your Child's Self Esteem," and Thomas Gordon's, "Parenting Effectiveness Training," which told parents that all the world's ills, such as poverty, war and prejudice, stemmed from the archaic idea that adults should exercise authority over their children.

Instead, we new-age parents said we were going to talk things out, like civilized people should and little did we realize that children are not civilized.

In fact, I liked Rosemond's opinion that it takes at least 13 years to properly civilize a child and the civilizing must be conducted by a group of powerful authority figures acting in concert.

The irony of all this, he said, is a human is far smarter than a dog, but much harder to civilize. Why? Because a dog is born to please and a human is born determined to be pleased.

As children ourselves once upon a time, all of us can remember our parents saying things like, "Because, I said so!" as a response to "why" we weren't able to do something.

We remembered how such a saying tasted

badly and so out it went! In it's place, we started saying things like, "Let's talk about it"or"Can we figure out a way we can both get our needs met? ...or..."Let's be friends." Any of those aforementioned things tasted much better, so as parents, in they came.

Also like Rosemond, I was determined to emphasize only the positive, so that our children would glow with "self-esteem." If we emphasized only the positive, only the positive would happen.

"We would never have to punish our children," Rosemond said. "Oh joy, oh downfall."

He continued by saying, "Flat on our faces we fell, taking our children with us. In other words, our parents raised a generation of children at odds with their beliefs and, we in turn, have raised a "no fear" generation, which is starting to raise who knows what.

Rosemond said that although his wife was still in one of the dressing rooms, he could no longer continue talking with the "lovely, well-intentioned, silly goose of a woman" who was about to begin repeating all the mistakes that many of us are willing to admit we made as well.

I know I have said this before, and I know I didn't make it up because it's been written and spoken many, many times.

Children need discipline and authority figures in their lives and unless groups of powerful authority figures act together in harmony, I hold out very little hope that some children will grow up to take their rightful place as responsible and caring people in their homes, community and the world.

Happy parenting!

Decker is editor of the Free Press. Her column appears on Fridays.

Local government needs to be open

The Ottawa Herald

Solving one problem shouldn't lead to another, but that's the kind of predicament Franklin County Commissioners potentially put themselves in with the public by not discussing the creation of a new position.

Last year when county commissioners were accepting bids for the county counselor position upon the expiration of Blaine Finch's two year contract, hiring a full-time county counselor as an employee was among options discussed. For whatever reason, the county chose to hire Scott Ryburn with Anderson, Byrd, Richeson, Flaherty, & Henrichs, to take over that role. The

change has proven expensive.

Despite commissioners and interim County Administrator Jay Newton's request to county department heads to tamp down legal questions to Ryburn, rising hours of usage and subsequent costs escalated to upwards of \$6,000 to \$7,000 monthly.

Commissioners, no doubt, made a wise hire of assistant county attorney Lisa Johnson for the position which begins July 3. It is typically wise to promote from within whenever possible. Plus, Johnson has the personal qualities and legal acumen to perform well in the position. However, for the sake of full disclosure and the opportu-

nity for public discourse, commissioners should have talked openly about the change in an open meeting and should have posted the position — internally at minimum.

Creating a full-time position requires payment of benefits — oftentimes about a third of the cost of an employee's annual salary. Those are new expenses not incurred when legal services are contracted for. Despite those additional expenses the administrative decision is a sensible one — so there's no reason not to have had recent discussions in the open and have posted it to ensure no other qualified candidates were overlooked in the hiring process.

About those letters . . .

The *Free Press* encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, if at all possible, and should include a telephone number and an address. These are used for verification of the writer only. If, however, you want your address and telephone number to appear with your letter, please ask us to do so when you submit your letter, or include a note with your letter. Most importantly, all letters must include a signature. Unsigned letters cannot be published. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and length, and, likewise, reserve the right to reject letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive or libelous. You can expect your letter to appear in print within 24-48 hours of receipt. Letters to the Free Press allow readers to become engaged in public debate on topics they deem important. Please consider sharing your thoughts with the family of Colby Free Press readers. Thank you.

Mallard Fillmore

● Bruce Tinsley

