

Opinion



Free Press Viewpoint

A law's intentions is starting to show

From The Emporia Gazette

Call it good news.

Only 168 seizures of methamphetamine-related materials — labs, supplies and equipment — were reported by Kansas law officers in 2006.

That “only” is in there because the figure for 2005 was 390. In 2004, there were 634 seizures. Assuming that law officers have not eased their efforts to beat back the meth epidemic and that meth makers have gotten no craftier, the figures indicate that the manufacture of meth in Kansas has been reduced by about two-thirds in three years.

KBI Director Larry Welch told The Associated Press that part of the reason for the drop in meth manufacturing in the state was the Sheriff Matt Samuels Chemical Control Act, passed by the Legislature in 2005. The law, named for the Greenwood County sheriff who was killed in a raid on a meth lab, placed tight controls on the sale of common over-the-counter medicines that are used to make meth. It is good that a law named to honor Samuels has had such a profound effect on the safety and well-being of the people of Kansas.

But meth has not been eradicated in Kansas. Of last year's seizures, 77 were dump sites — places where the remains of meth labs were abandoned after the drug had already been made and distributed. That means that some labs are still operating successfully in the state. And those labs are not the biggest problem.

Welch said that shutting down Kansas labs allows law enforcement to focus more on an even bigger problem: shipments of meth from Mexico, which, he estimates, supplies 80 percent of the drug sold in the state.

Drug labs are easier to spot than drug smugglers. Methamphetamine will continue to be a problem for the people of Kansas for years to come. But there is little question that the problem would be worse if not for the Samuels law.

It is doing what it was intended to do.

The Best Of Don't worry, we have more

If you know of others who want to fill out our Best of Thomas County survey that was in Friday's paper, but don't have another copy of Friday's paper we have more at the office.

Remember, photocopied entries will not be accepted. Please return the surveys to the office by Feb. 20. We'll need some time to tabulate all the winners and go through the comments.

Entries can be mailed to us at Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan. 67701. Or they can be left at the office.

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*.

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

tcoc@nwkansan.com

Jan Katz Ackerman, Area Reporter

ackermanjk@ruraltel.net

ADVERTISING

Crystal Rucker - Advertising Sales/Director

crystalr@nwkansan.com

Kristi Powell - Advertising Sales

kpowell@nwkansan.com

Emily Wederski - Advertising Sales

ewederski@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, Jim Jackson, Delisa Allen, David Erickson, Betty Morris and Dana Huthansel

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 \$40, 8 months \$56, 12 months \$74. By mail with in Colby and the nine-county region of Thomas, Sheridan, Decatur, Rawlins, Cheyenne, Sherman, Wallace, Logan and Gove counties: 4 months \$53, 8 months \$65, 12 months \$82. Other Kansas counties: 4 months \$60, 8 months \$70, 12 months \$85. All other states, \$85, 12 months.

Nor'West Newspapers

Haynes Publishing Company



Owners did the right thing

A week ago, I was saddened to hear that Barbaro, the 2006 winner of the Kentucky Derby, was euthanized after an eight-month ordeal after breaking his leg in the Preakness.

Being a horse lover, how could I not be?

And ironically enough, his broken leg had healed. What led his owners and vet to the decision to put the colt down was the fact he had an abscess in the hoof of the leg he had broken (the right hind leg) and had developed a case of laminitis in his front feet.

Laminitis is a dangerous, debilitating and sometimes fatal degenerative hoof disease in horses. It is a condition where the hoof separates from the coffin bone — the bone that gives the hoof its shape and supports the weight of the horse.

If caught quickly, it can be treated, and in some cases, reversed. But in advanced cases, often the only solution is a horse be euthanized.

Since the whole thing began, I've heard people complain about how so much effort was put into saving the life of a horse — an animal.

Well, animals can't exactly take care of themselves when they get hurt, can they?

The horse's owners obviously thought enough of their colt to try and save his life, and not just because of his potential value as a sire. Even if Barbaro had been saved, there was no guarantee his leg would have healed well enough for breeding purposes, and even if he had survived, they probably would not have wanted to risk him in that fashion.

And I've also heard people call the colt's “struggle” “gallant.”

The colt didn't really struggle at all. He was just a horse. But what was gallant was the efforts of his owners and the vet staff at the University



Tisha Cox

● Off The Beaten Path

of Pennsylvania's New Bolton Center.

Barbaro's behavior during the last eight months of his life was a testament to his breeding, handling and training. Only a horse that was handled and trained well could have responded the way Barbaro did.

Though the colt is gone, there is now room for change in the racing industry and I, for one, am grateful for that.

By the end of the year, California is requiring that all its tracks install a synthetic surface to help cut down on equine injuries. Several tracks have the surface, and the numbers of injuries and fatalities have already gone down.

A fund was started — the Barbaro Fund, for research into finding the causes and a treatment for laminitis that will benefit all horses, and not just Thoroughbreds.

Barbaro also proved horses with bad breaks can be treated, and possibly saved from their injuries, if a way can be found to prevent laminitis, which he developed because of uneven weight distribution on his other three legs.

And the colt's owners have something else to turn their attention to now.

A half-brother to the colt, Man in Havana, is in training and may be entered in the Kentucky Derby.

A yearling full brother to Barbaro will begin training this spring.

Barbaro's dam, La Ville Rouge, the mother of Man in Havana, also, is carrying a full brother to Barbaro, which will be foaled this spring. And after that colt is born, the mare will be bred back to Dynaformer, Barbaro's sire.

I know some could ask the question — why would they want to risk these related animals on the track? The answer is the bottom line, it is a business, just like anything else.

These animals, as much as I hate to admit it, would not have a real purpose if they weren't bred to race. Their expensive existence has to be justified somehow.

The racing industry is starting to realize it needs to take better care of its reason for being, and it is an industry that has been around since the beginning of the United States. It started as an amusement with short-distance races that gave us the American Quarter Horse, and has evolved into what it is today.

Thoroughbreds are a 300-year-old breed that originated by breeding Arabian stallions to English mares, and has been further refined over the years.

The breed carries an ancient legacy in its blood, and the hopes and dreams of owners on their backs.

I think Barbaro's owners did the right thing, in trying to first save the colt, and the decision to end his life.

Because animals can't make such decisions for themselves.

Tisha Cox is a general assignment reporter/photographer for the Free Press. Her column appears on Mondays. tcoc@nwkansan.com.

Senate bill review



Ralph Ostmeyer

● Senator 40th Dist.

SB 14: Methamphetamine Registry: The bill requires offenders convicted of unlawful manufacture or attempted manufacture of methamphetamine, distribution or trafficking of methamphetamine, and offenders convicted of possession of the chemicals used to produce meth with the intent to use the product to manufacture methamphetamine, to register.

The bill also would require the offender to pay a fee for registration on the Kansas offender registry and clarifies the money collected from the statutory fee would remain in the sheriff's office in the county in which it was collected to offset costs of the office registering the offenders. SB 14 passed the Senate 39-0.

SB 65: Satellite Voting for all Counties: Currently, law restricts satellite voting places to counties with populations exceeding 250,000 (Sedgwick and Johnson counties). This bill would expand to all counties the ability to designate places other than the central county elections office as satellite advance voting site. SB 65 passed the Senate 40-0.

SB 18: Uniform Child Abduction Prevention Act: Enacts the Uniform Child Abduction Pre-

vention Act (UCAPA) and provides the courts with guidelines to follow during custody disputes and divorce proceedings.

The main purpose is to help courts identify families which have children who are at risk for abduction and provide measures to help prevent their kidnap. These measures include travel restrictions, a prohibition against removing the child from this state, restrictions on the child's passport, and restrictions on custody or visitation. If a judge finds a credible risk of imminent abduction, the court may issue a warrant to take physical custody of the child. SB 18 passed the Senate 40 to 0.

SB 66: Extension of Lottery: Extends the lottery in perpetuity and does away with the sun-

set clause eliminating the need for legislators to have to act to continue its existence. Also, because games are electronically connected to the Kansas Lottery, the need to attain and display the lottery retail certificate was also eliminated. SB 66 passed the Senate 36-4.

SB 69: School Finance Fix: Specifically, the bill would lower the maximum percentage of Local Option Budget (LOB), required in order for school districts to access the cost-of-living weighting or the declining enrollment weighting, to 25 percent. SB 69 passed the Senate 39-1.

OUT OF COMMITTEE:

SB 37: Smoking Ban: The Senate Judiciary passed out of committee without recommendation a proposed smoking ban. An additional amendment allowing county commissioners to opt out of the smoking ban, subject to a protest petition for 30 days. If a county does opt out, a municipality within that county can enact a smoking ban if their regulations are more stringent than the state law. Also included in the areas exempt from the ban are freight and passenger trains and commercial trucks.

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. 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.

Mallard Fillmore

● Bruce
Tinsley

