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Free Press Viewpoint

Drug bill a burden, not problem solver

Law enforcement groups are pressing the Kansas Legislature to require a prescription for purchase of the common drug pseudoephedrine, used by allergy sufferers to stop a runny nose, but also a key ingredient in making the illegal drug methamphetamine.

This is not a good idea. It amounts to punishing the state's pharmacists and allergy patients in the name of a problem that's largely solved.

Kansas already restricts sale of pseudoephedrine, often known by the brand name Sudafed. Stores are required to keep it behind the counter and buyers must sign a log.

Someone with the sniffles can buy 3.6 grams, more than 100 pills, at one time, or up to 9 grams a month. That's enough for most patients, but getting even that is cumbersome and unwieldy.

Though many law-enforcement officials say the problem of meth labs in Kansas has been largely solved, some groups still are pushing for tighter laws. Drug dealers will send out teams of people to buy Sudafed, a practice known as "smurfing."

Pharmacists and clerks often spot these efforts and many will call police. It's already illegal, but still, the dealers are bound to try.

The fact is, the number of meth labs in the state today – once a rampant problem - has dropped to almost nothing. In Salina, for instance, police say the city once had more than 100 illegal meth operations and now has only a handful.

Why, then, do we need to further inconvenience allergy patients and druggists?

The price of this "progress," by the way, has been a takeover of the meth trade by Mexican cartels, resulting in violence across that once-peaceful country and upwards of 30,000 deaths. Meth-making, once a cottage industry, has become a big money-maker for organized crime.

Putting these important allergy drugs on the prescription list will drive up the cost to legitimate users and drug stores alike, reducing availability and legal use, while having almost no benefit to society.

This bill is a turkey, and the Legislature needs to say "no." Not everything that might sound like a good idea turns out to be one, and this bill is a good example.

- Steve Haynes

Where to write, call

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774 roberts.senate.gov/public/

U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran, Russell Senate Office Building Room C-4, Washington, D.C. 20002 (202) 224-6521 moran.senate.gov/public/

U.S. Rep. Tim Huelscamp, 126 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715 or Fax (202) 225-5124. Web site: huelskamp.house.gov



LIKE CLOCKWORK

How do you know it's 'the real stuff'?

While visiting with friends over a glass of wine, the conversation turned to communion. We had three or four Christian faiths represented, so we traded our favorite memory of the sacrament of Holy Eucharist. More specifically, we talked about wine.

Cheryl, who is Methodist, told us of visiting a Lutheran church when her boys were preteens. The family was invited to partake in communion and accepted.

As the 9-year-old left the communion area, he punched his younger brother with the whispered comment, "Hey, this is the real stuff."

Yes, she said, the Lutherans use real wine, not the grape juice my First Christian grandmother always complained about. She just wondered how her son would know that the communion wine was "the real stuff."

While the First Christian Church my grandmother attended only had communion about once a month, and my grandmother didn't drink, she complained every month about their use of grape juice instead of "the real stuff."

I wouldn't have known the difference. Even though the Catholic Church always used wine, in those days only the priest partook of that part of communion. The people got the bread but no wine. Some Catholic churches still do



not provide the second half of the sacrament to parishioners, although nearly all of them around here do.

After a wedding Steve and I attended at a fancy hotel in downtown Denver, the officiating priest realized he had consecrated a lot more wine than the mixed-church-background congregation needed. He wasn't quite sure what to do about the chalice-full of sacramental drink. You can't just pour the Blood of Christ down the drain.

He said that it had to be drunk. If that wasn't possible, it could be poured onto the ground and allowed to soak back into the earth.

Since there wasn't a spot of earth for blocks, several people passed the cup until it was dry.

The next wedding I went to was at the Baptist Church. You don't get those kinds of problems there.

Steve was born into the Episcopalian church, and they welcome "all baptized Christians" to the communion table, unlike us Catholics, some Lutherans and probably lots of others, who require membership in their church to partake.

So when our Jewish son-in-law was taking photos for the Topeka Capitol Journal at an Episcopal church many years ago, he talked to the priest before he started to shoot so that he would not disrupt her. He told her that he was Cuban but Jewish.

She apparently didn't get the disconnect between baptized and Jewish, because when it came time for communion, she issued him a special invitation to partake with all baptized Christians.

He smiled, shook his head and replied, "Still Jewish.'

Well, I'm pretty sure he's not going to get any of that extra wine at the next wedding he attends.

Cynthia Haynes, co-owner and chief financial officer of Nor'West Newspapers, writes this column weekly. Her pets include cats, toads and a praying mantis. Contact her at c.havnes @ nwkansas.com

Honor the anthem, don't shriek it

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I think we need to call a halt to the apparent contest raging in our country over how to sing our National Anthem.

There's really only one way, the way the composer put it down on paper. For unknown reasons, the past few years, we have heard singers try to hit notes that few, if any, can reach in an attempt to answer the roar of many in the stands. Boo to them, too!

We were speechless at the outset of Super Bowl 45 in Dallas on Sunday to have a "super" singer get her tongue tied up and her screaming vocals going nowhere as words were repeated before a shocked crowd of 100,000 and 100 million watching on television.

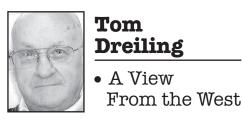
I don't know how they pick the singer but this one sure bombed. Our nation's beloved "Star Spangled Banner" should never be subjected to the torture it received Sunday.

As the television cameras scanned the crowd, it looked, unfortunately, like there were more people not holding their hands over their hearts, but instead holding their breath to see if this singer could outdo all the others in reaching beyond the reachable. She couldn't.

Her body language and screamability reminded me of sounds coming from places where birth is about to take place.

Our National Anthem is more of a hymn, performed to audiences who show their respect by standing at attention with their right hand over their heart. This was absent Sunday, as it is absent on most occasions anymore. Maybe we need to start from scratch, in kindergarten, to teach our little ones what the National Anthem is all about and have them carry it forward.

Thank goodness Super Bowl 45 provided greatness on the football field, because the halftime show wasn't anything to write home about either. And the owner of that massive indoor arena, Jerry Jones, didn't make many friends among the thousands who had tickets to enter only to learn there were no seats for them. Well, there were seats, but in a place in the structure deemed dangerous.



Everything is bigger in Texas, so Texans say, so it goes without saying the biggest Super Bowl blunders ever occurred in, where else, Texas!

Responses: Mike Barkley, of San Diego, formerly of Goodland, writes: "I hope you print all of these (columns) out and put them in a notebook for your grandkids to find and read someday.²

More in the next column!

My late wife Jeannie made the best-tasting mashed potatoes of anyone. They were special, they were outstanding, deee-licious, they were the talk of the town, so to say. I used to tease her when we were with our social circle that her mashed potatoes were better than making love.

I don't know what she put in them, but the taste was hard to describe. I couldn't get enough of them.

Anyway, every time I brought this topic up, and it was often, she would just smile, and she had the prettiest smile. She never said anything. One evening when we arrived home from a dinner and dance, we were both tired, so we readied for bed. She was first to be done, so as she came out of the bathroom, I went in.

When I came out, I noticed the bedroom was dark. She said she switched off both lights on the bedside tables after opening the window on my side of the room because it was so warm and muggy (this was in July). So I hopped in bed, stretched around a minute or two and then took off my watch to lay it on the table. As I did, my hand touched something I never be- after the Thursday before the polls open.

fore felt.

I mumbled, "What in the world is this?"

I switched on the light, and there is was: a bowl of mashed potatoes! Jeannie rolled over, looked at me, chuckled, and said simply, "Enjoy yourself, dear!"

She then rolled back over to her side of the bed and drifted off.

There were no more mentions of her mashed potatoes.

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Tom Dreiling of Aurora, Colo., is a former publisher of the Colby Free Press and The Norton Telegram, and a former long-time editor of the old Goodland Daily News. He is a life-long Democrat, a curmudgeon come lately and a newly minted Coloradan.



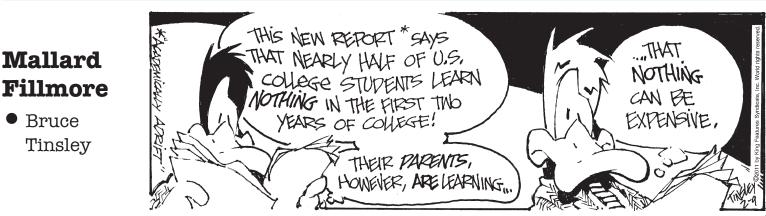
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