



Free Press Viewpoint

Banning drugs sound legislation

A law banning the possession or sale of synthetic drugs known as potpourri and bath salts went into effect recently, marking what hopefully will be the end of easy access to these dangerous substances.

Police, medical professionals, lawmakers and prosecutors throughout the state all had raised concerns about these drugs, which increasingly landed in the hands of teenagers. Sometimes, the use of these drugs ended with dire or fatal consequences.

Unlike previous laws that banned specific products, such as K-2, this law is comprehensive and bans an entire group of compounds, which should pre-empt any attempt by manufacturers to alter the drugs slightly in an effort to circumvent the law.

There never was any question that these drugs should be banned, or at the very least made less accessible to teenagers. The proliferation of drugs with names such as "Bubble Gum Fun" sold in corner stores without age restrictions was irresponsible and brought about the need for legislation.

The unscrupulous business practices of the manufacturers and the retailers who knowingly sold to minors clearly wouldn't have changed without compulsion. A concerted effort by a concerned public, however, gave law enforcement officials the tools needed to keep these substances out of the hands of minors.

— *The Hutchinson News, The Associated Press*

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, 354 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510 (202) 228-6966. Fax (202) 225-5124 moran.senate.gov/public/

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

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol Building, 300 SW10th St., Room 225-E., Topeka, Kan. 66612, (785) 296-7399 ralph.ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

State Rep. Rick Billinger, Docking Building, Room 754, Topeka Kan., 66612, (785) 296-7659 rick.billinger@house.ks.gov

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COLBY FREE PRESS

155 W. Fifth St. (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963
Colby, Kan. 67701 fax (785) 462-7749

Send news to: colby.editor@nwkansas.com

State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout, Columns, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography. Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

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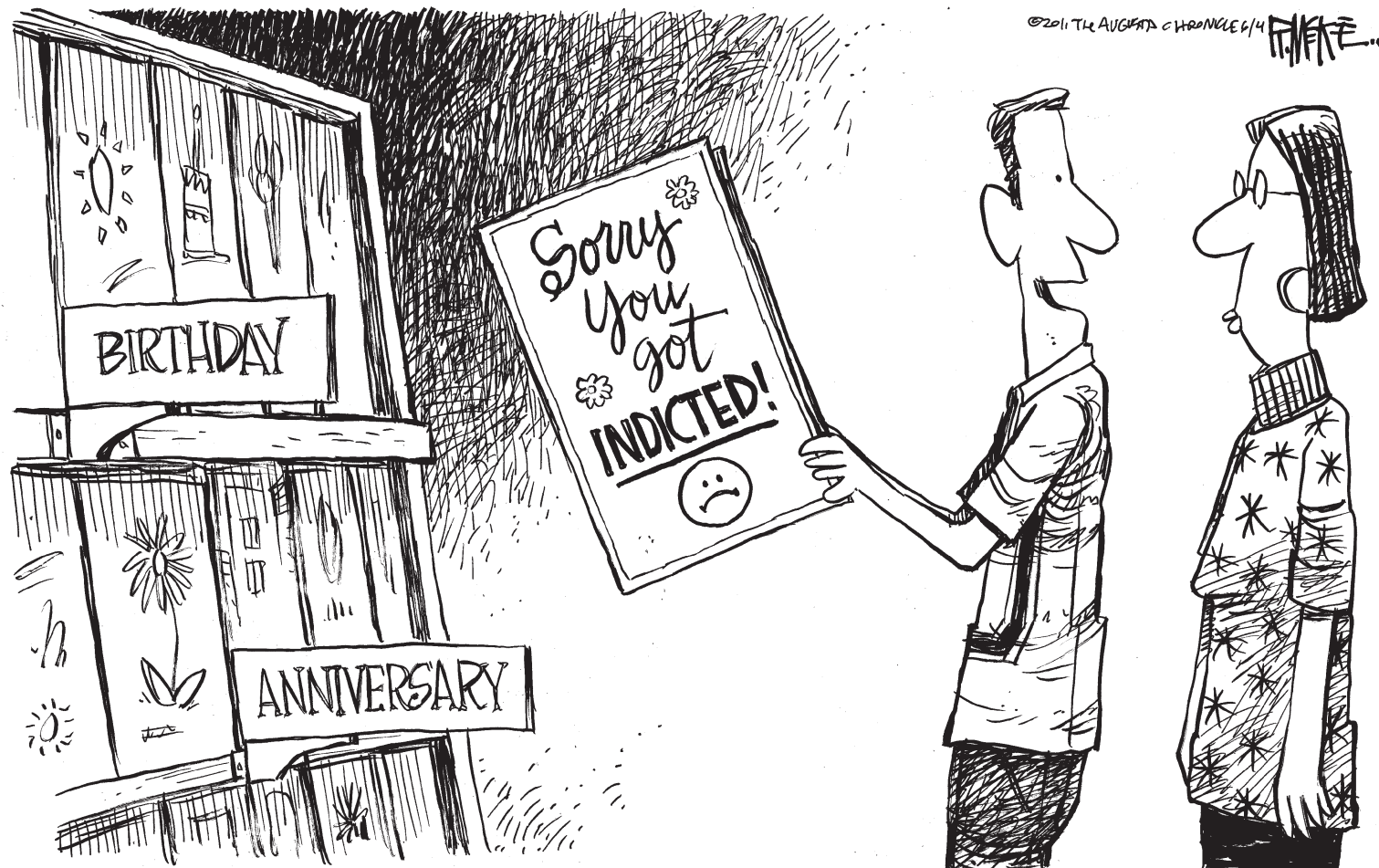
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THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the days observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by NorWest Newspaper, 155 W.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

PERIODICALS POSTAGE paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 6 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 herein. Member Kansas Press Association and National Newspaper Association.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: In Colby, Thomas County and Oakley: three months \$35, one year \$85. By mail to ZIP Codes beginning with 676 and 677: three months \$39, one year \$95. Elsewhere in the U.S., mailed once per week: three months \$39, one year \$95. Student rate, nine months, in Colby, Thomas County and Oakley, \$64; mailed once per week elsewhere in the U.S. \$72



"IT'S A FATHER'S DAY CARD FOR JOHN EDWARDS!"

Some bugs a treasure, ticks are just trash

I like snakes and lizards, toads and frogs, turtles and most bugs.

In fact, I've collected or kept most of the above as pets at one time or another during my life.

I'm not crazy about spiders, but I've been known to nab a perambulating tarantula if the occasion warranted it. (Youngest daughter once requested one for her biology classes.)

But, there is one bug that I just cannot abide. It gives me the creeps, and when I find one, I go berserk.

I hate ticks. I hate them, loathe them, despise them and really am not at all fond to be on the same planet with them. When I find one on me, I scream like a little girl and throw an absolute fit until the insect is not only off me, but safely, securely and very truly dead.

When we returned from a hike one time to find 16 ticks on us and the dog, I refused to go on that trail again during tick season. In fact, the trail is now known in our family as Tick Creek.

Not everyone is so squeamish about the blood suckers, however.

One friend who calmly checks herself and



Cynthia Haynes

• Open Season

her dog for ticks each day after walking in the high grass just discards the little monsters.

I prefer to squash them and then run them down the toilet.

Another friend found some use for the tiny insects.

Her son collects bugs for his entomology exhibit at the fair each year. No bug is safe around this kid. He collects all year and has his mother keep the specimens in the freezer until it's fair time.

When the dog came in with a huge, dark lump under her eye the other day, his mother calmly got a pair of tweezers to remove the little sucker.

After a quick check of his bug book, the son came dancing in with a baby food jar.

"Be careful, Mom," he insisted.

"Don't worry, dear," she said. "This won't hurt the dog at all."

"No," he insisted, "be careful of the tick. I want it for my collection. I'll get an engorged one and then one that hasn't eaten. Won't that be cool?"

Ticks, he then informed her, are a whole new class for his exhibit. Ticks and mites, he said, occupy a class together.

His mother obligingly put the full tick in the jar and found another couple on the dog that hadn't had a chance for a good meal and added them, too.

While she was happy to help with the project, she said, there are some things she wasn't going to do.

"I'm not going to pin that thing for him," she said.

Amen, sister.

Cynthia Haynes, co-owner and chief financial officer of NorWest Newspapers, writes this column weekly. Her pets include cats, toads and a praying mantis. Contact her at c.haynes@nwkansas.com

'Sputnik moment' long overdue

"This is a wake-up call," U.S. education officials declared when international PISA scores were released a few months ago. The United States ranked in the middle of the participants, with math scores a hundred points lower than Shanghai students.

Prominent educators declared that this was "another Sputnik moment," alluding to that day, Oct. 4, 1957, when Americans woke up to hear that the Soviet Union had become the first to launch an artificial satellite into space. That resulting inferiority complex generated a huge push to kick our science education up a notch.

It turned out that the United States was not behind in the "space race" at all. But for two decades, resources were poured into science education. And it made a difference.

Kansas State Teachers College was one center for the Sputnik-era reform. We received national grants to improve science education. Money was directed to where it made a difference: science departments.

Science teachers from across the country, from Florida, California and Maine, came to Kansas to double their coursework in science.

Programs comprised academic year and summer institutes. Some science teachers had inadequate initial science coursework. Veteran teachers realized their science was out of date. Rapid progress was being made in biology (the DNA revolution), chemistry and physics (our space program and nuclear power).

National scientists rose to the challenge as well. Nobel Laureate George Beadle came to



John Richard Schrock

• Education Frontlines

Emporia to help train biology teachers. Teachers went back to their home schools knowing that they were part of a national effort to advance science. They were the leading edge in convincing students to pursue science, and agents who would ensure that students learned more and better science.

Institute-trained teachers had an "esprit de corps" that lasted throughout their careers. The youngest finally retired by the late 1990s. And with their retirement (along with the No Child Left Behind fiasco), we have seen a sharp decline in American students entering science and science teaching.

Between the 1970s and the present, teacher in-service training was hijacked by educational reform movements that switched professional development away from biology, chemistry, physics and earth science. "Strategic reforms" promoted by education schools had kidnapped the money by the 1980s.

Eisenhower grants specifically targeted to update science teachers in summer programs were diverted to nonscience coursework. In

this last decade, Kansas teacher in-service training was placed in the hands of school committees that focus on getting test scores raised. Content training has been abandoned.

State and national science "standards" now contain more teaching methods than science. Accreditation of teacher institutions at both state and national level likewise shortchanges science content and penalizes strong content programs. Under a banner of "less science, not more," most states have drifted to one-size-fits-all, shallow-trained science teachers.

Kansas is one of just 11 states that still requires depth-of-training in biology or chemistry or physics — a residual strength left from those Sputnik-era workshops.

If the U.S. was to panic and reinstate a "Sputnik-era" acceleration of science education, the money today would mostly be diverted to useless education and instructional-technology fads.

We are shutting down our space shuttles. We can no longer afford a robust space program. A growing proportion of our engineers, physicists and chemists are foreign born. Science-teacher production nationwide is about one-fifth what is needed to fill vacancies.

The call for another "Sputnik moment" — directed to science departments — is a little late.

John Richard Schrock, a professor of biology and department chair at a leading teacher's college, lives in Emporia. He emphasizes that his opinions are strictly his own.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

