

Other Viewpoints

Guns on campus won't stop violence

Allowing concealed guns on campus is not the solution to stopping school violence.

Kansas is one step closer to allowing employees of public schools and colleges to carry concealed guns, thanks to legislation that cleared the state Senate last Wednesday.

Our lawmakers, who approved the measure by a 35-5 vote, are making a huge mistake – one with the potential for deadly consequences and one that should cause parents everywhere to be concerned for the safety of their children.

The Associated Press reported that the bill expands the number of public buildings into which people with concealed-carry permits can bring their weapons. The measure includes a provision allowing local school boards, community and technical college boards and state university administrators to designate employees who could carry concealed weapons, even if such firearms are banned from campus buildings.

The House has already approved a similar measure, and a final version is likely to emerge from negotiations between the two chambers next week. In addition, gun-rights supporters expected senators to consider another proposal next week challenging federal regulation of some firearms.

Earlier this month, House members also approved a separate bill declaring that the federal government has no power to regulate firearms, ammunition and accessories, such as holsters, that are manufactured, sold and kept in Kansas. The measure also makes it a felony for any employee or agent of the U.S. government to attempt to enforce any law, regulation, order or treaty affecting such items.

All of this should be cause for concern.

The way to combat gun-toting lunatics is not by bringing more firearms onto our school campuses. A bullet, whether fired by a deranged monster or a school employee trying his darnedest to stop a melee, still has the potential for tragedy.

Friendly fire is equally dangerous.

Bringing another firearm onto a campus is not the answer. This bill's passage is simply a knee-jerk reaction to December's deadly school shooting in Newtown, Conn. Lawmakers have feasted on the fears of the American public, which is slowly – and begrudgingly – coming to the conclusion that there is no easy solution to this heart-wrenching dilemma.

If someone wants to inflict harm, it can be done – in a despicable headline-making way.

More guns on hand would only exacerbate an already deadly situation.

– *The Hutchinson News, via the Associated Press*

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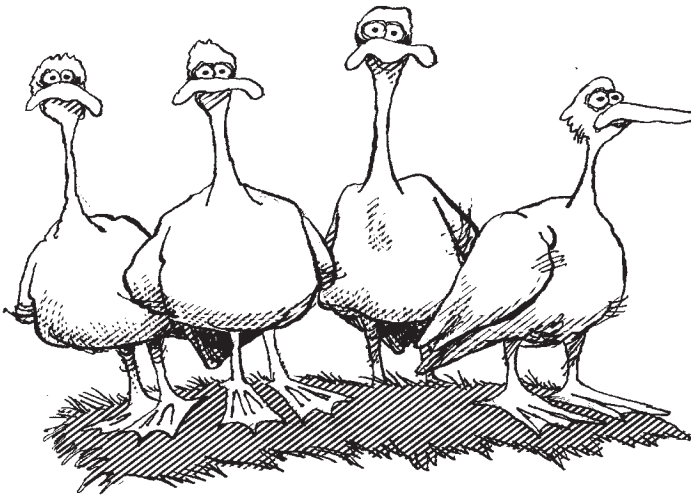
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GAGGLE



A GROUP OF GEESE

GOOGLE



A GROUP OF STUPID

Drink to health of children

One alarming trend in our society today is the prevalence of junk food in our diets – and more importantly in those of our children.

While the selection of junk foods continues to grow and the enormity is mind boggling, let's focus on just one: soft drinks.

They have wiggled their way into nearly every venue in our society. About the only public place I haven't seen them is in the back vestibules of our nation's churches.

Soft drinks have no place in this nation's schools. Soft drinks have little, if any, nutritional value. Look at the ingredients in a soft drink the next time you pick one up. Most people wouldn't have a clue what these ingredients are, myself included.

To be part of a balanced diet, a food product must have nutritional value. Unlike water, soft drinks won't even quench your thirst. They leave you longing for a tall, cool glass of water.

And that's what we should have in all our public places – water, lots of it and other healthy drink alternatives.

Talk to a nutritionist or physician and what is the ingredient we're supposed to drink at least eight glasses of?

That's right, nature's own liquid – water.

What about that wonderful white liquid chock full of calcium we call milk? Where does it fit in our daily diet?

Milk belongs in a balanced diet. Nutritional research has stressed that men and women be-



John Schlageck

• Insights

Kansas Farm Bureau

tween the ages of 11 and 24 need the equivalent of five servings of dairy products daily. This can be milk, yogurt, cheese, ice cream and a whole array of other good-tasting dairy foods.

Kids need healthy food and drinks. During these growing years, the bones in the human body are like a calcium bank. Between 11 and 24, bones are continually taking in calcium. From 24 until about 50 years of age in women and 65 in men, the body reaches an equilibrium point. But after those years, the body begins to extract calcium from the bones.

Milk is a healthy, nutritional food that belongs in our daily diets. Proper intake of milk in a well-balanced diet can reduce the risk of osteoporosis by as much as 50 percent.

Juice from oranges, grapefruit, lemons, strawberries and other fruits is another item that belongs in a balanced diet. Food products from natural primary crops – not always secondary, highly-processed food products – are essential to our youngsters' diets. We owe it to them and their good health.

Vegetable drinks made from tomatoes, carrots, celery and other vegetables are loaded with vitamins, minerals and fiber. Vegetable drinks also belong as part of our daily diets. Have a V8 instead.

But let's return to soft drinks. As a youngster my parents only allowed us to drink them on special occasions. Dentists and nutritionists contend these products can cause tooth decay. While I know genetics and proper daily oral hygiene play a major role, I didn't have my first filling until about six years ago, and I'm somewhere in the half-century club age wise.

Coincidence?

I think not. Selling soft drinks is about one thing only – making money. I don't have a problem with anyone making a profit. It's the American way. I just believe that food products should have plenty of nutritional value.

So if you need to treat yourself, add chocolate to the milk. Mix a couple of the fruit juices together or just drink water. You'll be doing yourself a favor and you'll be supporting farmers and ranchers who supply these fresh, tasty, nutritious drinks.

Make mine chocolate milk. Bottoms up.

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. He grew up on a diversified farm near Seguin, and his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

You know good teacher when you see one

What makes a good teacher?

Federal and state governments have begun defining good teachers based on student scores on external tests. Yet every one of us knows that a drill sergeant who drills-and-kills student interest and excitement in learning in an attempt to raise test scores is anything but a good teacher.

Look back at your good teachers. They changed your life by building your confidence. Boosting enthusiasm. Helping you develop good habits. Insisting on respect. And helping you earn respect from others.

Good teachers treated you and other students as individuals. Students came in as different personalities with different skills. And you graduated out as different individuals. Unlike many of today's schools, your teachers never tried to make you a uniform student "product."

Today, education schools are falling in line to salute the new factory model. They design checklists of traits that all teachers will demonstrate. They push "best practices" to raise scores. They assign numbers to teacher evaluation scales and pretend the numbers make teaching a science.

As a trained scientist, I know these checklists are pseudoscience. A very mediocre teacher could look at the checklist, change a few trivial classroom activities and rate as a superteacher. Genuinely outstanding teachers may rank as average. When outstanding teachers follow the checklist, they set aside their unique skills. They increase their checklist score and lose their ability to inspire. Evaluating teachers on external student tests and standardized teacher checklists is for education what leeching is to modern medicine.

Teaching is not a science. Teaching is an



John Richard Schrock

• Education Frontlines

art. And artists vary in the methods they use. Checklists can no more develop and rate outstanding teachers than they can rate outstanding artists such as Picasso or Rembrandt. External uniform assessments and checklists reduce art to paint-by-number.

My job requires that I evaluate student teachers. I do not sit at the back of a classroom and watch the back of students' heads. I need to sit forward enough to see students' eyes: their "ah-hahs," their excitement level, their level of engagement and the puzzled looks that draw a teacher's response and change the lesson. If a teacher is interacting with students, not giving a test or showing a video, I can tell if the teacher is effective with 10 minutes of observation.

But there is one caveat – the evaluator has to know the subject being taught. Long ago, a set of researchers sent a fraudulent teacher, a Dr. Myron L. Fox, into a classroom. This actor had been carefully coached to teach with great enthusiasm but avoid teaching anything of substance or accuracy. His entertaining ability won the day and not one student detected the fraud. To avoid this "Dr. Fox effect," an evaluator must know the course subject. A principal who was formerly a science teacher can evaluate a new science teacher, but perhaps not an English teacher.

Schools and university accrediting agencies that insist on using external evaluations

to judge teachers drive out the creativity and academic freedom and responsibility that have made American schools the rich producers of Nobel laureates, inventors and problem solvers of earlier decades.

A dramatic drop in creativity is just one of the disastrous results for our students under No Child Left Behind teaching-to-the-test. To move this standardized system of external assessment and checklists to university teaching and accreditation shifts American academics away from unique teaching of unique students.

Art, music, literature, surgery, arguing a case in court – all join teaching as quantities that cannot be checklist. It takes a professional to know a professional. And I can defend this assertion by a U.S. Supreme Court ruling. In 1964, Justice Potter Stewart, in his concurring opinion in *Jacobellis v. Ohio* explained the impossibility of defining pornography, concluding "But I know it when I see it..."

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.

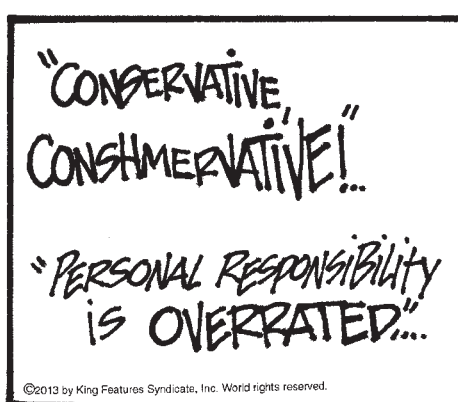
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Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley



...AND "TASTES GREAT, LESS FILLING!"

