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CLEVVY  
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# commentary

from other pens...

## Kids need to know that drugs can kill

(Editor's note: Oberlin may be a distance away from Goodland, but the discovery of a designer drug has lessons we can learn from. It is probable where you read Oberlin it could easily also say Goodland.)

It should come as no surprise to anyone that the so-called "designer drug" ecstasy has shown up in Oberlin.

Although it has become wildly popular among teens across the nation, it has not gotten much attention here. A chemical relative of the more common methamphetamine, which is epidemic in Kansas, ecstasy is thought by many to be safer and more fun.

It's not, of course, and it's just as illegal, but history suggests that neither fact will keep kids from trying it. While state figures show meth use, for instance, to be "high" here, at around 2.4 percent, it isn't really much — yet. Older, more accepted drugs are still the "choice" in our town.

The simple fact is that, in a society where nearly all the adults use some kind of drugs — alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or chemicals — kids are going to try them. And since they're all illegal for teens, the law doesn't seem to make much difference to them.

It would be hard to pick the "worst" drug, but next to heroin, certainly alcohol is the most dangerous. It causes far more problems in our society than any other drug, but because it is legal and available, it often gets less attention than the more elaborate chemicals.

No drug is good for kids or adults, of course, but since lots of adults use one or more of them, the real question is, how do we minimize the damage, to society and to individuals?

Education and "prevention" efforts, like those under way in Oberlin today, are positive if they aim at showing kids the dangers and pitfalls of drug use, including arrest and a criminal record, of course. Telling teens to "just say no" seldom works.

But kids need to know that drugs can kill. Ecstasy may seem exotic and dangerous, both to users and worried parents, but the fact is, thousands of kids die every year from alcohol abuse, in wrecks and overdoses alike. Kids need to know all of this.

Law enforcement may be part of the answer, but overall, it isn't working. The more we spend on drug enforcement, the higher drug use gets. Teaching common sense might be the best answer.

Most Oberlin teens know by now that you can get in a lot of trouble for taking a bottle to a school dance. Pills ought to be right up there, but of course, no one who does something like that thinks he will be caught. Knowing the score, knowing the dangers, ought to help guide kids through this minefield. And having parents and other adults set a good example wouldn't hurt, either. We all can be a part of that.

Then, finally, there needs to be (and in Oberlin, we suspect there will be) consequences when kids screw up. Drugs of all kinds are here, and it's our kids who have to make the choices to survive and become adults.

Let's help them. — Steve Haynes

## High bills signal need for austerity

It really wasn't the \$8,000 gas bill that got us going on our austerity program.

I knew the minute I opened the January bill from Midwest Energy for the Colby Free Press and read \$8,174.79 that it was a mistake.

I was almost sure it was a mistake. It better be a mistake, I thought, or I'll have to take out a loan to pay my utility bills this month.

The month before, the bill had been \$583 — high but not off the charts. This one was outtasight.

A quick call to the gas company confirmed my suspicion that someone couldn't read when they looked at our meter. The final bill came in at about \$500 — still high, but I wouldn't need a second mortgage to pay it.

What really got us going on austerity was the February bills. Not only was the gas, electricity and phone bill up, but newsprint and mailing costs were about to send me looking for my friendly neighborhood banker.

We buy newsprint by the ton and ink by the barrel. When these two items go up, they really go up, and we use about 20 tons of paper a month.



**cynthia haynes**

• open season

That's a bunch of trees.

It was time to do something. Time to look over the operation and see where cuts could be made.

All operations were asked to turn their thermostats down to 60 degrees at night, not use any electric heaters and keep the temperature at 68 degrees during the day.

In Oberlin, we hired a man to put weather stripping on the doors, close off a vent in the back room and put in a cat door between the office and storage area.

It was suggested that we move Tigger's cat box and food to the bathroom but, we decided that we would prefer to invest in a cat door and keep the smells in the back of the building.

Of course, Tigger couldn't use a cat door — the carpenter measured him before ordering. Tig required a medium-size doggie door — and a new diet.

In St. Francis, we built a partition between the old press area and office area several years ago, but it only went to the false ceiling and cold air still got into the work area. So we got the partition taken on up to the real ceiling.

In Colby, a quick walk-through of the building revealed a heater on in the store room and a hot water heater going in a dark room we haven't used since we got digital cameras.

In Goodland, a vent by the front door was covered and we cut the color pictures from the papers most of the time. To get good color pictures takes a lot more paper and ink, since the ink flow has to be adjusted while the press is running.

Nobody is really fond of the austerity program, but spring is in the air and soon we'll be able to turn off the heat and open the doors so Tig won't have to use the cat door — which he doesn't like very well. He claims it's too tight.

### where to write

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## Don't believe everything you read on the Internet

The Internet is full of hoaxes and satirical online magazines — e-zines — that may not say they are just spoofs.

I have tried to educate the people on my e-mail list about Internet hoaxes after I got burned a few times myself. I thought I had taught them not to send me items that were taken from hoaxes or satirical magazines. But I was wrong.

Recently, I received an e-mail blasting J.K. Rowling and her famous wizard-in-training character, Harry Potter. The information was taken straight from an e-zine, [www.theonion.com](http://www.theonion.com).

What my correspondent didn't know was that *The Onion* is a satirical online and print publication and anything it says is not meant to be taken seriously.

Surfing the Web is just like the old saying, "Consider the source." Whatever you read or hear, consider the source.

If the source is something like *The Onion*, it isn't meant to be taken seriously.



**roxie yonkey**

• star tracks

Sometimes people do mean you to take them seriously, but the e-mails they send you aren't the truth. They may not know it, but they may be leading you down the wrong path.

Fortunately, some public-spirited people have put "hoax pages" on the Internet. Hoax pages explain if various rumors are true or false — including viruses.

If you receive an e-mail or hear a rumor that you think may be too good to be true, check out the following pages. Please don't go spreading more falsehoods on the Internet. If it's too good (or too weird) to be true, it probably is.

Roxie's list of hoax pages:

Mining Company's anti-hoax page, <http://urbanlegends.miningco.com>

Hoaxbusters, <http://HoaxBusters.ciac.org>

Computer Virus Myth Page, <http://www.Vmyths.com/>

Stiller Research Hoax News, <http://www.stiller.com/hoaxes.htm>

Hoax Kill, <http://www.hoaxkill.com/>

Hoax Warnings, <http://www.europe.datafellows.com/news/hoax.htm>

(only for virus hoaxes)

Don't Spread That Hoax, <http://www.nonprofit.net/hoax/default.htm>

Urban Legends Archive, <http://www.urbanlegends.com/>

Internet Scam Busters, <http://www.scambusters.org/>

Symantec Security Updates, <http://www.symantec.com/avcenter/index.html> (only for virus information)

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## Cloning denies our uniqueness

Last Sunday, my son asked why he had to go to church when he was having a perfectly good time watching "Scooby Doo." The main reason, I told him, was to understand that God went to the trouble of creating him as a person unlike anyone else who ever lived and that He put him on this Earth for a reason. (The other reason he had to go to church was because I said so.)

I thought about this incident when I read that the members of Congress had heard expert testimony on human cloning this week. Now that several groups are trying to produce a human baby, the cloning debate has shifted from ethics classes to Capitol Hill offices.

One group, headed by a Kentucky professor and an Italian fertility doctor, says it expects to clone a baby within the next 12 to 24 months. A cult leader who says humans were created in a space-alien lab leads another group. This group is trying to clone the dead 10-month-old son of a grief-stricken couple.

The cloning attempts feel like a race, as if the scientists were creating a revolutionary new drug instead of a human being. It doesn't seem to matter that the risks are still enormous.

A recent New York Times story pointed out that, four years after scientists cloned Dolly the sheep, cloned animals still have a high rate of developmental delays, heart defects, lung problems and malfunctioning immune systems. Indeed, fewer than 3 percent of all animal cloning efforts succeed.

Rael, the cult leader, explains away such concerns. If defects are detected in the fetus, it will be aborted and another surrogate will immediately be implanted with another embryo. Rael doesn't acknowledge that certain defects cannot be seen at birth. Some cloned mice, for example, appeared normal but then grew grotesquely fat as young adults.



**joan ryan**

• commentary

Based on health risks alone, a ban on human cloning is an easy call. But what about when the glitches are fixed?

People cringed at in vitro fertilization, too, when it was first introduced, making comparisons to Frankenstein's monster. Now, thousands of babies are born every year through the process.

Some say cloning should be allowed in a nation that values individual choices. "I don't think the federal government has the constitutional authority to regulate how I have children," one philosophy professor said.

If our problem with cloning is that it denies the genealogical uniqueness of individuals, well, we already have such humans in identical twins.

Yet, I can't help thinking about my conversation with my son. I like to believe there is something of the divine in every human, that some gentle hand purposefully mixes an infinite variety of ingredients to create something the world has never seen. I remember last year when researchers announced they had finally mapped the human genome and discovered that the number and type of genes in a human and a common field mouse were not that different. In other words, the mystery of who we are and what we become was not solved, but deepened.

Cloning, it seems, brings us closer than we have ever come to removing what makes us truly human. It would seem to turn babies into objects to be custom-built and paid for by check or credit card.

### berry's world

GOOD EVENING. WE ARE DOING A SURVEY. PLEASE GIVE ME YOUR FULL NAME, DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH, SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER, YOUR MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME AND ...



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