

from our viewpoint...

## Attacks on KU class raise ire, eyebrows

Oh my. After 20 years, the state’s prudes have caught up with the fact there is a class at the University of Kansas that teaches students about sex. It’s a fact. It’s a popular class.

There is a limit of 500 students, and every semester for nearly 20 years, 500 students have packed into a lecture hall at that great and noble institution on the Kaw to hear Dennis Dailey’s lectures. And see his pictures, of course.

Now Sen. Susan Wagle, a Wichita Republican of the most Victorian stripe, has latched onto Professor Dailey’s ankles. And the deeper she sinks her teeth, it seems, the more publicity she gets.

We at *The Star-News* have not been to this class, nor have we seen the pictures, thank you. Some of us attended KU, but in an era when students talked about sex among themselves but did not expect the university to teach them about sex. There were no classes on sexual technique, at least not that we enrolled in.

Nonetheless, sex was then and remains, the No. 1 topic of conversation on campus, followed closely by beer. Today, talk of sex is more public. *The University Daily Kansan*, for instance, is likely the only newspaper in Kansas with a regular column on sexual technique.

We submit, that at most colleges, there is a lot more talk than sex. And we’ll maintain that having students learn about sex in class, rather than from rumors and magazines that come in plain brown wrappers, is not such a bad thing. Society might be well served if we *all* learned about sex in a class rather than in an alley, or the darkened back seat of a car.

Oh, but Sen. Wagle is mortified. Students are being subjected to pornography, she maintains. Apparently her knowledge of this is from an intern in her office who was or is a KU student and took the class.

She charges that Dr. Dailey sometimes says things to young women which are not nice and actually endorses pedophillia, or sex with children. He denies that most vehemently.

Sen. Wagle’s legislative tactics are abhorrent. She attached a provision to an unrelated bill barring the state from spending money on any department of any university of the state which teaches pornography, including the School of Social Welfare at KU, where Dr. Dailey is a professor.

*The Star-News* has long opposed such last-minute slam-dunk tactics, which bypass the legislative process and undercut the very meaning of democracy. There was no hearing, there was no debate, just a little rider tucked away in a budget bill that had to be passed.

Then there is the issue of academic freedom. Dr. Dailey’s fellow professors, and a lot of other people, say Sen. Wagle is trying to silence him. No student has been forced to take this class. No student has been forced to finish it. Or to watch the pictures (they’re optional).

The university, the faculty and students, at least, have rushed to his defense. They gave him the Del Shankel Teaching Excellence Award last week, the top prize for a teacher on the Hill.

Our guess is Professor Dailey will continue polluting the minds of Kansas youth for years to come. Sen. Wagle may keep complaining for years to come, but people will move on to more important issues.

The Legislature should bar these last-minute slam-dunks. Let people take their bills to committees for a hearing, and have them buried right and proper, we say.

One thing is for sure. If they had a hearing, and Professor Dailey brought his pictures, they’d need a bigger room. Chairs for 500, maybe. Oh my. — *Steve Haynes*

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## Ups and downs of life are like a plane ride

I don’t know about you, but I’ve decided life is like a plane ride.

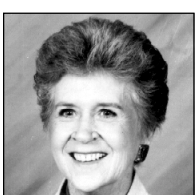
Yesterday I was on an airplane, flying back home after a weekend with one of my sons and family. It is always a joy to be with any of my family, but this was a particularly important weekend. My oldest grandson graduated from high school.

I was glad to be there to celebrate with him, yet there was a flood of memories. I remembered my own high school graduation, his grandfather’s and his father’s graduations.

Three generations celebrating in different places, different styles and in vastly different times.

Three generations. Time has passed so quickly and moves faster every day. Once I thought my opportunities and options were without limit. Now I see life winding down — beyond my control — much like a plane ride.

Yesterday I felt the plane take off and soar — much as my grandson’s launch into adulthood. He is now a “high school graduate;” his



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life is all before him. There are endless possibilities for him.

I so much want his life to be problem-free and just as he dreams. I want his flight through life to be smooth and productive.

The plane flew over some turbulent clouds that shook the plane. Winds swept up through the beautiful laciness to create potential problems.

What looked beautiful was seductive by its deception. A lot like life. It takes a well-grounded young person to remain stable in such an environment.

Eventually the plane landed safely, having defeated all the potential problems, having sailed through the clouds — homing in on unseen beacons that guided it safely when the

## Responding to people is democratic process

Picture this:

A bunch of people go to the city council. They say kids are speeding down their street, and they want a stop sign put up to slow them down.

City officials sympathize, but say, “Well, that’s not what a stop sign is for. We have speed limits. The cops can give some tickets.”

And the people say, “Your cops are never around, and the kids just keep on speeding, and someone will get killed.”

So the councilmen talk about it, and they say, “Put up a stop sign and see if it works.”

That’s democracy in action.

Same thing happens when a bunch of people go to the county commissioners and say, “We need a new focus on economic development.”

It takes a while, but with a lot of back and forth, it gets done. There are winners and losers, fiefdoms are disturbed, even destroyed.

But that, too, is democracy in action.

In Topeka and in Washington, citizens can walk right into an office and get a hearing with their senator or representative. Or sometimes, especially in Washington, an aide who represents said representative.

Others are called to testify in the hearing process, ordinary citizens who know something about an issue or have some interest in a bill. They are listened to. Still others work the halls and offices, lobbying for their groups, their industry, their businesses. They are listened to as well.

All that is part of democracy, and most of the time, it works.

Contrast that with what happens at the average school board when someone brings in a problem. Most boards will listen to any citizen complain. Sometimes they will talk with the citizens. More often not.

There are lots of reasons for this. Most everything a school board deals with can affect individual students or individual teachers, especially complaints. School boards are conditioned



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never to talk about these things in public.

The reason given is to protect the privacy of those involved. Left unspoken is the fact that in this day and age, people will sue a school board at the drop of a hat.

Those outside the closed doors, though, can never be sure that problems are being solved and issues are being dealt with. They can never be sure democracy has been served at all.

Picture a couple who come to complain about how their son has been treated. The school board stands mute. Anything they say can and may be used against them in a court of law. So on the advice of counsel and their state association, they say nothing.

No one is happy with this. Not the board members, not the administrators, not the parents. But that’s the way these things are done.

Where is the community, the voters who have to judge board members and vote in school elections? Who stands up for their interest?

What happens when parents come to complain about events at a school, and the discus-

### where to write

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